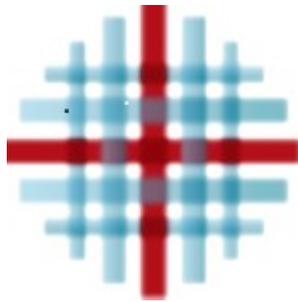


Project for Orthodox Renewal
Orthodox Christian Laity
www.ocl.org



Seven Studies of Key Issues Facing Orthodox Christians in America

Originally published in 1993.

Steven J. Sfekas
George E. Matsoukas,
Editors

Prayer Honoring the Holy Spirit

Heavenly King and Comforter, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere, who fillest creation, the Treasure of all blessings and Giver of life, come and dwell within us. Purify us from every blemish and save our souls, O gracious God.

We DEDICATE this book to the Spirit of Truth present in all of us baptized, chrismated, Orthodox Christians and we pray that, through prayer, discipline, faith and study, we learn to listen and trust the Holy Spirit in us and to act responsibly, as is our duty, for the Good of Christ's Church.

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Introduction

PREFACE

The Board of Directors of Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) presents the Project for Orthodox Renewal, (seven studies of key issues facing Orthodox Christians in America) written for the good of the Church. This publication enables OCL to fulfill its educational mission of providing the "royal priesthood" of believers, clergy, hierarchy, and other interested Christians with information that fosters meaningful discussion on renewal of the Orthodox Church in the United States.

The summaries and recommendations of the Board have been placed by the editors in the beginning of the book to stimulate the reader to become engrossed in the Project for Orthodox Renewal.

The development of OCL discussion papers was suggested by Stephen J. Sfekas, Esquire, in a letter written to the Board in July, 1990. The seven topics approved by the membership at the Third Annual Meeting in Chicago, October, 1990, were:

Faith, Language and Culture
Spiritual Renewal
Orthodox Women and Our Church
Mission and Outreach
Selection of Hierarchy
Administration and Accountability
Orthodox Unity

Stephen J. Sfekas was appointed to the Board of Directors and became Task Force project chairman. Topics were assigned and six of them were completed and presented at the Fourth OCL Annual Meeting in Baltimore, October 1991. Twelve hundred draft copies were distributed to members, annual meeting participants, clergy, hierarchy, theologians and lay leaders of the Orthodox Church at that time.

At the Fifth Annual Meeting in St. Louis, October 1992, the Board voted to publish the revised papers in a formal book format. Board member, George Matsoukas, an educator, was appointed co-editor and fund raiser for the project.

The papers represent the independent scholarship of the authors, their committees and individual members who offered suggestions and comments. They are not necessarily official OCL viewpoints. The seven papers are interrelated in the fact that all the authors share a love of and concern for the Orthodox Church and its mission of bringing those created in the image of God closer to Him. The discussion papers exist to raise relevant questions and generate thoughtful debate within the Body of Christ so that Christian ends can be achieved. The RECOMMENDATIONS, on the other hand, are official OCL Board approved suggestions to be considered and incorporated into Church policy in order to further the renewal of our Church.

The OCL board believes this entire project, process, and product bears a powerful witness to our Orthodox Christian faith established in the United States by our immigrant ancestors. It is a testament to their progressive thinking and concern for the religious future of our people. The project reinforces

their example of active lay participation in the continuous development of the Orthodox Church. Prayerfully, this "Project for Orthodox Renewal" can be utilized to strengthen the Orthodox Church in the United States as we begin the third millennium of our Orthodox Christian witness to the Resurrection of Christ.

George Matsoukas
Co-Editor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editors thank the Orthodox Christian Laity Board members 1990-93 who encouraged and supported the development and completion of the "Project for Orthodox Renewal." Their vision to undertake such a monumental project with such limited resources is testimony to their love of the Orthodox Church.

The dedicated and hard-working authors and task force members, who helped in the preparation of the seven topic areas, are commended for their patience and scholarship. The members of the OCL and others who offered written and oral comments, and participants of the Fourth Annual Meeting (Baltimore, 1991) who also served as critical listeners of the information presented in workshop sessions, are acknowledged for their contribution to the successful completion of the project.

The editors are thankful for the technical, critical and editorial assistance offered by Board members Van Livadas, Minerva Stergianopoulos and Soteri Tsoutsouras and member Alice Kopan. Editorial and stylistic suggestions were also provided by Steven Brahlek, Communications Professor, Palm Beach Community College. Special appreciation is extended to the law firm of Weinberg and Green, Baltimore, Maryland for their support. The cover icon was suggested by Fr. Stephen Juli, Washington, D.C. We are thankful for his prayers imploring the successful completion of this project.

There was an initial publication of 1,200 copies of the Commission Papers for Workshop distribution, October 1991, made possible by the support of OCL Board member George Coupounas.

The final format you are reading is the result of the generous contribution and matching grant offered by OCL member Helen Datel, Washington, D.C. Her generous contribution was matched by individual OCL Board members and others to whom we are grateful.

Finally, the editors acknowledge Marian S. Valerio who served as secretary and word processor during the three-year period it took to complete the manuscript. In addition to her technical skills as typist, formatter and editor, she was confidant, conflict resolver and a Christian inspiration. Her patience and good cheer held this project together.

We also thank you, the reader. We pray that the insights offered herein create constructive dialogue and contribute to creating renewal within the Orthodox Church in America.

George Matsoukas
Stephen J. Sfekas
July 1, 1993

Faith, Language and Culture

by Charles Moskos, Ph.D.

An assessment of the Church's contemporary situation in the United States must be anchored to the eternal truths of the Church. These truths stand independent and apart from the social currents of particular historical eras. Our purpose here is to advance the universal faith and tradition of Orthodoxy by examining certain sociological realities of the Church in America.

First and foremost, we must seek to disentangle wishful thinking from social reality. We must look at ourselves honestly and realistically. It is commonly accepted that the American environment has had a powerful socializing influence on the members of our Church. As an institution as well, the Church clearly reflects some adaptation to major aspects of the cultural, political, and economic contours of American society. None of this need imply any contradiction between Holy Tradition and the advancement of Orthodoxy in an American milieu. Our mission, rather, is to build upon the foundation of our immigrant forebears who laid the basis for an Orthodox Church in the new world.

The Church in America is not a national Church, in which Orthodox correligionists make up the large majority of the population. Nor is it a diaspora Church, which means that its members hark back to some kind of emotional, if not physical, return to an ancestral homeland. Neither is it any longer an immigrant Church, whose members were born in the old country. Rather, the Church is evolving into an indigenous and American faith whose promise is limited only by the vision of its congregants.

As the Church in America approaches the end of the twentieth century, one way to convey recent developments is to contrast the older generation of Greek immigrant church builders with the later generations of church inheritors. The 1980s marked the end of three decades of widespread church construction in the United States. Most of the builders of the post-World War II generation were motivated by the desire to establish a Greek Orthodox presence in what was then mostly an alien environment. By the time the churches were standing, however, American society had changed. Greek Orthodoxy was no longer so alien, a reassuring sign of the success of the builders' intentions.

Yet the inheritors did not accept the bricks-and-mortar mentality that equates the success of Greek Orthodoxy with the construction of more churches and community halls. They had less of an emotional stake in the outward presentation of their religion and were inclined more toward an inward Orthodoxy. In the 1950s the Greek Orthodox were struggling with the question of what it means to be an American; in the 1990s, comfortably American, they struggled with a more fundamental question: what it means to be Greek Orthodox.

The plan of this paper is straightforward. First, we discuss certain demographic realities. Second, we look at the issue of language and liturgy. Third, we turn to the question of Greek ethnic identity in this country and the relationship of such identity to the Church in America. We conclude with a look toward the future.

DEMOGRAPHICS

To understand social changes within the Greek Orthodox Church in this country is ultimately to grasp

trends in Greek-American demography. To a large degree Greek Orthodoxy reflects changes in the numbers of new arrivals, the proportion born in the old country versus the proportion born in the United States, reproduction rates, the frequency of intermarriage, the age and generational distribution, converts from and losses to other denominations, and so on.

Immigration

First readings on the Greek-American population come from immigration statistics. We can divide Greek immigration conveniently into seven distinct periods.

Early Migration: 1873-1899. A trickle of Greek immigrants began to arrive in the 1870's, but by the end of the nineteenth century only some 15,000 Greeks had entered the United States. The approximate annual average was 500.

Great Wave: 1900-1917. The great wave of immigration, when 450,000 Greeks came to these shores, started at the turn of the century and ended in 1917 when the U.S. entered World War I. The approximate annual average was 25,000.

Last Exodus: 1918-1924. The final phase of the earlier immigration of 70,000 Greeks lasted from the years following World War I until the doors of immigration closed in 1924. The approximate annual average was 10,000.

Closed Door: 1925-1946. The two-decade "closed door" period lasted through the end of World War II. Only some 30,000 Greeks came to this country. Many of these were brides of immigrants already settled in America. The approximate annual average was 1,300.

Postwar Migration: 1947-1965. After World War II the doors opened somewhat, especially under provisions for displaced persons. Some 75,000 Greeks arrived here. The approximate annual average was 4,000.

New Wave: 1966-1979. Starting in 1966, when the immigrating laws were changed to allow easier entrance for the relatives of persons already here, a new wave of 160,000 Greeks came to the U.S. The approximate annual average was 11,000.

Declining Migration: 1980-present. For over a decade, immigration from Greece has tapered off considerably. Only 25,000 Greeks came to these shores during the 1980s. The approximate annual average is 2,500. But with returnees, the net growth rate is probably, under 1,000 annually.

The end of immigration from Greece is the first demographic reality for a contemporary understanding of the Church in America.

Fertility Rates

One other important remark must be made about the Greek-American population. For at least two decades, the American-born generations have not been replacing themselves. In terms of economic and educational status, Greek-Americans have done well, but certainly they are fewer in number than if they were not so well educated and so well off. With no renewal of immigration in sight and with little

likelihood of a rise in the birthrate, the Greek-American population will shrink somewhat in the years to come.

The Greek-American and Greek-Orthodox Populations

Our numbers in the United States are much lower than inflated public relations statements. The U.S. census remains the best source of data on the Greek-American population. In the 1980 census, persons were asked to identify their ancestry in terms of national origin or descent. An identical item was included in the 1990 census, but the tabulations from that census are not yet available. Most likely, the numbers of Greek-Americans to be reported in 1990 will be smaller than those of 1980.

The 1980 census reported that 615,000 Americans identified themselves as being of purely Greek ancestry and that another 345,000 identified themselves as having some Greek ancestry. Thus, under one million persons can be considered Greek-Americans on the basis of national origin. Of course, all of those who acknowledge Greek origins do not necessarily identify themselves with the Greek community or even have personal feelings of Greek ethnicity.

By using available census and immigration figures and by making some assumptions about the ratio of births to deaths since 1980, we can calculate the generational distribution of Greek-Americans in the early 1990s. An informed estimate would be as follows:

First generation

(Immigrants)	200000
Second generation	350000
Third generation	250000
Fourth generation	100000
Total	900000

In other words, about a quarter, or slightly less, of all Greek-Americans have Greek as a mother tongue. The Greek language competency of the later generations is unknown, but realism dictates that English is the preferred language for virtually all of the American born. A large number of the second generation (children of the immigrants), to be sure, have some fluency with the Greek language. For the vast majority of the third and later generations (the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the immigrants), if truth be told, Greek language competency is meager to nonexistent. We examine ways of improving Greek language capabilities later in this paper.

Religious affiliation is not tabulated by the census. A 1975 Gallup poll of American religious preference found .031 who identified as Greek Orthodox (Reinken). If the Gallup figures are extrapolated to the total U.S. population, there were approximately 670,000 self-identified Greek Orthodox in this country in 1975. A 1990 survey, however, reported only about 550,000 self-identified Greek Orthodox (Kosmin). Let us, for the sake of argument, then, say there are some 600,000 identifying Greek Orthodox in this country. The Archdiocese has approximately 130,000 dues-paying family units, which would come to approximately 400,000 individuals.

In broad terms, then, about two out of three persons with Greek ethnicity identifies as Greek Orthodox, and about the same proportion of these self-identified Greek Orthodox are formally affiliated with the Greek Archdiocese.

The Archdiocesan figures are not designators of active membership in Church life, of course. A tendency exists among even bona fide Orthodox Church members to limit their religious participation to occasional Church attendance. Such casual Church membership often leads to a movement away from the Church, not so much in a sense of renunciation or joining another denominational body, but in the sense that Orthodox Christianity is no longer a prime definer of one's religious identity. The danger is not that the Greek Orthodox suffer discrimination, much less persecution, in the United States, but that in the tolerance of American society, no Orthodox identity is maintained. The "drifting away" phenomenon is often accentuated by the growing likelihood of marriage with a non-Greek Orthodox.

Intermarriage

By the early 1990s, over two out of three marriages occurring in the Greek Orthodox Church involved a partner who was not Greek Orthodox. Furthermore, some number of the marriages in which both partners are reported as Orthodox include converts, thereby reducing the proportion of intra-Greek marriages even more.

The Greek-American community has had to change its position on intermarriage in the face of its frequency. The initial edict of the immigrant parents was to tell their children that all Greek potential marriage partners were better than all non-Greek. The next line of defense, typical of the second generation, was to acknowledge that there are equal measures of good and bad in all nationalities, but the sharing of a common Greek background makes for a better marriage. (Interestingly enough, the available Archdiocesan data, though not conclusive, show a somewhat lower divorce rate among couples in which one of the partners was not Greek Orthodox.) The final argument, a common recourse for the third generation, is that if one does marry a non-Greek, one must be sure that the spouse is able to adapt to the family kinship system and be willing to become Greek Orthodox.

At present, the non-Greek spouse usually plays a minor role in Church functions, but there is a discernible trend for some such converts to become more actively involved in Church organizations. Non-Greeks, in fact, have been elected to Church Boards. Converts (a very, very few who learn to speak Greek) have become a new element in the impetus toward a permanent Greek Orthodox presence in this country. Now that intermarriage has become the rule rather than the exception, its meaning has also been transformed. Outmarriage no longer carries a stigma of deviance in the community; thus it is much easier for exogamous Greek-Americans and their spouses who marry in the Church to continue an active membership in the Greek community.

Without frontal recognition of the increasing likelihood of intermarriage, there can be no long-term answer to the viability of the Greek Orthodox Church in this country. The battle against intermarriage is over. The focus now must be on how to retain the non-Greek spouse and the children of the intermarried.

The Children of Mixed Marriages

What happens to the children of intermarried couples? There is no firm answer to this question. But

there is good reason to think that a substantial proportion of children of mixed-marriages will have less identity as Greeks than those who are the offspring of two Greek-American parents. More salient, for our purposes here, intermarriage will reduce the number who identify themselves as Greek Orthodox in future generations unless measures are taken to incorporate non-Greek spouses into the Greek Orthodox community. (We do have data for Jewish-Gentile marriages. Among such marriages, only one-quarter are raised as Jews) (Jewish Federation).

It is revealing to examine the religious patterns of our five most prominent Greek-American political figures: Spiro Agnew, John Brademas, Michael Dukakis, Paul Sarbanes, and Paul Tsongas. Agnew and Brademas were children of mixed marriage and not raised in the Greek Orthodox faith. Michael Dukakis, although raised as Greek Orthodox and a member of the Church, did not marry in the Church and did not raise his children as Greek Orthodox. Indeed, a leading American commentator described Dukakis as "the first truly secular candidate we had ever had for the presidency" (Wills, 60). Paul Tsongas and Paul Sarbanes married non-Greek women in the Church and baptized their children as Greek Orthodox. Tsongas, who has addressed OCL gatherings, states his wife and children found themselves uncomfortable with the Greek ethnic overtones of the Church and found themselves attending the Episcopalian Church (Tsongas, 40). Only Sarbanes's children have a Greek Orthodox identity.

With such experience among our most prominent Greeks, it behooves the Church to consider ways to maintain or, perhaps more accurately, even create a Greek Orthodox identity among its children. Consideration must be given to instituting some kind of focused instruction in Church doctrine and history beyond the Sunday School level. Such instruction should be directed toward adolescence, a time when young people are most likely to drift away from the Church and a time when young people are forming an adult religious identity. At present, the knowledge of Orthodox traditions and beliefs even among our observant youth is often deficient. Simply ask our young people, for example, what is the significance of such major Orthodox holydays as January 6 and August 15.

LANGUAGE AND LITURGY

Once upon a time, a generation ago, to be Greek-American usually meant to know something about the Greek language. Even today, there is little doubt that if we could have instant Greek, if we could by some Brave New World method learn Greek in our sleep with little effort, nearly all Greek-Americans would be glad to do so. But learning and using Greek requires conscious effort, and the effort by and large was not being made by American-born parents for their children, much less for the children of mixed marriages. Increasingly Greek Orthodox affiliation rather than Greek language has become the defining trait of Greek ethnic identity in America.

The issue of the language and liturgy in the Greek Orthodox Church in this country is a vexing one. Orthodox Christianity clearly adheres to a tradition of coterminous liturgical and indigenous languages. But we must recognize that many native Greek speakers (though not all by any means) and some American born have a strong and understandable desire to perpetuate the mother tongue in this country. This stance in turn disaffects many of those for whom Greek is an alien language.

What aggravates the language question is that the liturgy has unique importance in Eastern Orthodoxy. The laity's presence and participation is indispensable in the liturgy. An Orthodox priest cannot celebrate the Eucharist without lay participation. The Churchgoer wants to find his or her faith

adequately, indeed inspiringly, embodied in the words and acts of the liturgy, that part of the religious experience which makes the most pervasive and persistent public manifestation and moves most hearts. It is through the liturgy that Orthodox Christians, more so than Occidental Christians, are formed in their Christian allegiance.

As early as 1927, a Boston bishop held that the Greek Orthodox could be considered faithful even if they did not know Greek (Papaioannous, 151). But this was a cry in the wilderness at the time. Archbishop Athenagoras was a conservative on the language issue, probably to avoid conflict with community lay leaders (Papaioannous, 142-43). Even Sunday schools were required to use Greek as the language of instruction up through the 1940s. Proposals for an English liturgy were seriously advanced in the 1950s, but Archbishop Michael authorized English only in sermons. During the 1950s, a major transmission of Greek Orthodox commitment to the American born occurred through the lay-directed Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA). Significantly, Michael allowed English to be GOYA's official language. GOYA served as the incubator for a generation of lay leaders in the Greek Orthodox community.

In 1964, the clergy-laity congress allowed certain readings and prayers in the liturgy to be repeated in English. In the important clergy-laity congress of 1970, following the personal appeal of Archbishop Iakovos, an English liturgy was permitted, depending upon the judgment of the parish priest in consultation with the bishop. The progression to English would have been inevitable and relatively smooth had it not been for the large influx of new immigrants from Greece in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With the arrival of the new immigrants, older traditionalists could join forces with a younger constituency committed to the Greek language. The Greek Orthodox Church was more ready, in effect, for English in 1965 than it was in 1980. During the 1980s, however, the long-term movement toward English was clearly reascendant. In fact, even some of the newly ordained priests had only a shaky mastery of the Greek vernacular.

The tide of Americanization that began to lap at the feet of the Church in the post-World War II era has continued to rise in each succeeding decade. Despite resistance, the Church has begun to adapt to linguistic change. By the early 1970s, most liturgies were predominantly, but not exclusively in Greek. By the early 1990s, language use varied widely. Churches in the immigrant neighborhoods of the larger cities offered their services entirely in Greek. Churches in the metropolitan suburbs and in the West and South, those most likely to be attended by the American born, had services increasingly in English. By the early 1990s, in a manner of speaking, a kind of local option system had evolved.

The language issue to some degree solves itself outside of the liturgy. Language use in Church meetings, formal affairs, and informal conversation comes close to reflecting prevailing usage among those present. With a little give and take, no one is seriously at a language disadvantage. But the liturgy remains a source of linguistic contention. None of the various accommodations (singing parts of liturgies in both languages, a service partly in Greek and partly in English, alternating language use on various Sundays) is entirely satisfactory. The Church's policy of "flexible bilingualism," a mixture of Greek and English, dependent on the parish's linguistic makeup can only be regarded as temporary expediency. Indeed, it is inherently contradictory for the sermon and announcements in most of our churches to be in English while the bulk of the liturgy is in Greek.

The adaptation of an English liturgy in the Greek Orthodox Church in this country is handicapped by the fact that no authorized translation of the liturgy exists. Equally pressing, there has been no

concerted effort to synchronize an English-language liturgy with liturgical music. The time is overdue for a commission consisting of those well versed in theology, liturgical history, the intricacies of both the English and Greek languages, and Church music.

However, the lack of an authorized liturgy in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese should not serve as an excuse for inaction. The Antiochan Orthodox Archdiocese (1938) and the Orthodox Church in America (1971) have successfully used English as the primary liturgical language for decades, and there is no reason to believe that the Greek Archdiocese could not do the same.

Fostering a Greek Identity

To argue that the Church must come to recognize and nourish its new roots in America does not mean to forsake Greek ethnic identity. Celebration of Greek national holidays, classes in the Greek language, Greek cooking, Greek dancing and music, all have a place in the Church community -- if this suits a community's needs and desires. But it is to say that preservation and encouragement of Greek ethnic identity need no longer be an overriding responsibility of the Church. We might even argue that to some extent the Church has been distracted from its fundamental mission by seeking to become the prime, if not sole, conservator of Greek ethnic identity.

The time is ripe for serious consideration of long-range programs to foster ethnic identity by a multiplicity of groups. With the advent of inexpensive mass air transit, travel to Greece becomes an increasingly available option. Also certain programs could fit in rather nicely with the growing emphasis on education abroad for young people and continuing education for adults. The possibilities merely listed here await further discussion and modification:

1. A high school year in Greece for Greek-American youth. Such a policy could be modeled after the exchange program of the American Field Service. Each year thousands of overseas students come to the United States and an equal number of Americans go abroad.
2. A college year in Greece or a "fifth year" in Greece following a bachelor's degree.
3. A summer language and culture course for high school or college students. The pilot program of the University of Aegean is one model to emulate.
4. A continuing education program in Greece for Greek-American adults and their spouses. Such a program would foster both language and culture learning. The ulpan schools in Israel, where Hebrew is taught as a second language, is one such model.
5. A lecture series and seminar program geared to weekend attendance. Such a program could involve traveling lecturers and seminar organizers visiting local communities.
6. Some kind of fund to subsidize a journal of commentary and literature on Greek-Americana.

The above is only a first-draft listing. Readers can think of other concepts. Some of these programs could be self-sustaining by tuition or fees paid for by participants. Others might need supplementary financial support from foundations, Greek-American donors, Greek-American associations, and, in some cases, the Greek government. Everything appropriate to Greece applies equally to Cyprus.

Such courses and programs must be tailored to the capabilities and needs of the participants. What works for someone immersed in a Greek background will not work for someone coming to his or her Greek ethnicity afresh. We stress especially that such programs could also contain material on Greek Orthodoxy, thereby bringing some secularists closer to the faith.

TOWARD THE FUTURE

Serious questions, not all with definitive answers, can be raised against the argument that the Church should gradually release itself of primary responsibility for maintaining the Greek ethnic heritage in America. Here are three of the most serious, in ascending order of difficulty.

If not the Church, who will represent the interests of Greece and Cyprus in the American policy? The simple answer is that the Church in America cannot be the political arm of Hellenic interests. Indeed, for the Church to try to play such a role in American politics is counterproductive. On non-religious issues, the Church should stay clear of political involvements. The causes of Greece and Cyprus are best represented by secular leaders and groups in the Greek-American community and, as much as possible, by non-Greek ethnics in the American political system. The proper conception of political activism should be in accord with the strong American tradition of separation of church and state.

If the Church sheds its ethnicity, will not Greek identity disappear in this country? In point of fact, Greek ethnic identity is already disappearing. As we have sought to demonstrate in this paper, present trends augur the possibility of a virtual extinction of an identifiable Greek-American community in another generation. A variety of groups and multifaceted programs drawing upon varying constituencies promises to be the best way for Greek identity to flower in this country.

Will not a de-emphasis of our Greek ethnic heritage lead ultimately to the creation of an American Orthodox Church? Such a question must be addressed on its own terms and in due time, if and when it arises. Some view an autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church in America with alarm, others with joy. For the present, we can state that there is nothing that either forecloses or inevitably moves toward an autocephalous Church. At the minimum, pan-Orthodoxy must be high on the agenda of the Church in America. In any event, the Church must keep clear a sense of priorities. In these straitened times, resources should be directed toward those institutions that are the seed corn of our future. Of these, the Holy Cross School of Theology stands out as most worthy.

Looking at Greek Orthodoxy in the United States, we can offer the following generalizations. For the immigrant generation, Orthodoxy was Hellenism -- the two were virtually synonymous. For the second generation, Orthodoxy was found in Hellenism. To be a Greek in America meant to be a Greek Orthodox. For the third and later generations, Hellenism is to be found in Orthodoxy. This is to say that rather than viewing the increasing Americanization of the Church as antithetical to Greek identity, it will be only with an indigenous Greek Orthodox Church that we can expect any kind of Greek identity to carry on into the generations to come. Paradoxically enough, the more the Church reaches out and accepts non-Greeks, always without compromise of its doctrinal tenets, the more it will insure its own flowering and, therefore, guarantee some form of Greek-American ethnic survival into the indefinite future.

To conclude, it may be useful to distinguish between secular ethnicity and sacred ethnicity. Secular

ethnicity will slowly erode, despite rearguard actions by the diasporists. Sacred ethnicity, on the other hand, can strike roots in the new world -- a Church adaptable to changing social conditions and changing generations, while not deviating from its traditions and transcendental truths. If the Greek Orthodox Church in America were to emphasize secular ethnicity over sacred ethnicity, it might well end in a situation in which the descendants of the immigrants are neither Greek nor Orthodox.

Spiritual Renewal

THE TOPIC

The third annual meeting of Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) held in Chicago, October 1990, approved the formation of seven study groups to explore seven topics that were identified as critical to moving the Church ahead into the twenty-first century. The topic developed in this paper is Spiritual Renewal as seen in the context of the Church and by Orthodox Christians living in the United States. Understanding Spiritual Renewal is basic to developing the OCL "Project for Orthodox Renewal" because all the other topics relate to our understanding of Spiritual Renewal.

SUMMARY OF THE SPIRITUAL RENEWAL TASK FORCE

The task force paper defines spiritual renewal by understanding how it is seen in the tradition of the Church. This was accomplished by examining recommended books and interacting with select clergy. The perceptions of the living body of the "royal priesthood" on their understanding of spiritual renewal are examined through a survey instrument developed on the topic. The survey sample included 300 select members and the response rate exceeded 35%.

Spiritual renewal can be defined as the process of growth and transformation into the image of God. The spiritually alive are in a kinetic state because they constantly strive to approach God, become united with God by grace. God became human so we humans could become divine. He truly is in our midst! We learn to cooperate harmoniously with God and repeatedly renew our covenant with Him through the Eucharist. Through the synergy of working together with God by His grace we become obedient to His will. We are drawn to the Light. We are pure in heart. We are able to love and forgive. This transformation is accomplished through divine grace, human freedom, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to each of us at baptism through the Father when we are chrismated, anointed with holy oil.

We need to live the sacramental life in order to win the struggle of transforming our nature. The Church is the divine instrument through which we journey into God's time, place, and presence. The Church was established at Pentecost and is historic and apostolic. The process of learning about Orthodox spirituality and renewal is through the liturgy. Christ resides in the community of the Church. He is our living presence through His resurrection. The Holy Spirit is our guide. The Bishop, who is also the image of the Lord, is our teacher. The Bishop, through his teaching, preserves the message of the Apostles, baptized members of the body are participants in God within the Church and are to participate freely and responsibly in the life of the Church.

According to the tradition of the Church and the response of the laity, the task force on spiritual renewal concludes:

1. Life-long learning for clergy, laity and hierarchy needs to be the first priority of the Church. Christians have an insatiable natural urge to acquire spiritual knowledge because they are created in the image of God, and the Fathers teach that the image of God resides in our intellect which is the highest aspect of human nature. It is therefore natural for us to want this spiritual knowledge. Presently spiritual education is not the priority of the Church. Lay persons have not been educated nor

encouraged to understand the spiritual life of Orthodoxy, because of a combination of factors including: too few formal educational experiences available to them; major church writings not translated into English; and no official English liturgy available to the faithful.

2. Spiritual vitality in Orthodoxy can be restored only as the ministry is shared and the divine liturgy becomes participatory. We are all responsible for the spiritual life and vitality of the Church as we act together -- hierarchy, clergy and laity. Laity must once again find their place, know their duty to become aware of the traditions of the faith and then to actively assume their roles as guardians and participants in the faith. The Very Reverend Eusebius Stephanou has asked the direct questions:

Why the need for Orthodox spiritual renewal, when all the while the Holy Eucharist, which is celebrated every Sunday and on Feast days, is supposed to renew the Church both as a body of believers and as individual believers? Is there a missing ingredient? Every divine liturgy is, in a sense, a renewal conference. Why is it not meeting the need? (Stephanou).

Could it be because we are Christian spectators?

The obstacles that impede spiritual renewal can be lessened through developing a systematic process of spiritual education.

ELEMENTS OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Duty of the Laity: Be Aware and Be Guardians

Orthodox Christians have a responsibility and duty in the Holy Tradition of the Church to be fully aware of the faith. Vladimir Lossky states "that . . . each member of the Church is called to confess and to defend the truth of tradition. A Christian who has received the gift of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of the Holy Chrisma must have a full awareness of his faith! He is always responsible for the Church!" (Lossky, 10).

Baptized, chrismated members become the body of the Eucharistic Community of the living Christ and as the body are the guardians of the faith. This is our responsibility.

Among us, neither patriarch, nor councils could ever introduce new teaching, for the guardian of religion is the very body of the Church, that is, the people itself. (Patsavos, Art. 2)

Members of the Church are called to know, to preserve and to defend the truths of the faith. The Holy Spirit makes truth manifest and inwardly plain, in greater or lesser degrees, to all the members of the Church. George Florovsky further states in quoting Metropolitan Philaret, "All the faithful united through the sacred tradition of faith, all together and all successfully, are built up by God into our Church, which is the true treasury of sacred tradition" (Florovsky 1:53)

Shared Ministry

Syndiakonia, shared ministry, is what makes the Church Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Lossky says that since the Church is catholic in all her parts, each one of her members, clergy, laity, hierarchy, is called to confess and defend the truth (Lossky 16). The religious vitality of Orthodoxy rests on an intensive

spiritual life which permeates the whole mass of believers, united in the awareness that they form a single body with the hierarchy and clergy of the Church (Lossky 17). Religious vitality got lost in the Greek Orthodox Church in North and South America when barriers were placed between the clergy and the laity that would not let them share the ministry of Christ.

Florovsky states emphatically that in the tradition of the Church, authority in the Church is a shared authority -- the sharing and working together of clergy, laity and hierarchy because the Holy Spirit moves through all of us. "The whole body of the Church has the right . . . of verifying, or to be more exact, . . . the duty of certifying the truth" (Florovsky 1:53).

Spiritual Renewal will become a more vital part of our Church and be seen as a priority when laypersons once again realize their place in the Church. It is their duty to become aware of the traditions of the faith and then to actively assume their roles as guardians and participants in the faith. Clergy have a responsibility to help the laity discover their own unique duty within the Church. The truth of the matter is that laypersons do not know their duties and obligations. They have not been educated nor encouraged to understand the spiritual life of Orthodoxy, which includes active participation in the ministry of the Church, and they remain in a state of spiritual adolescence. The Christian education program of our Church is inadequate. The laity already discern this, as the survey included in this study indicates. We will mature in the faith when we assume our proper roles as individuals and members of the Body and allow Syndiakonia to become a reality in the Church.

As practicing Orthodox Christians we are Holy, we are reflections of God's Glory, we are the affirmation of God's Word. We must have the confidence to be spiritually aware and involved in the syndiakonia, shared ministry, of all aspects of the Church.

*And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the Body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. **Ephesians 4:11-13***

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL RENEWAL?

Spiritual Renewal is the process for growth and transformation into the image of God. Therefore, the Orthodox Church and the spiritually alive members of the body are in a constant state of movement. This is so because the goal of our lives is striving to approach God, becoming united with God by grace. Orthodox Theology describes this process as Theosis/Deification. Christ is in our midst because God became human so we humans could become divine. "The perfection of the human person and the very substance of human spiritual life is to partake of God's nature and to share in His life. And in this world this means always and of necessity to share in His sufferings, joyfully and gladly" (Hopko, Fullness 47).

Indeed God created us in His image and after His likeness. We strive to be like God. Likeness is the dynamic and not yet realized potential to be with God (Mantzarides 17-21). We choose to be like God. We are already in God's image. All of us start in His indistinct image and we share His image as common property as baptized humans. Being in the image of God, Gregory Palamas teaches, "resides not in the body but in the intellect, which is the highest aspect of human nature" (Mantzarides 17). Man fashioned in His image exhibits an inherent conjunction of intellect, intelligence (logos) and spirit. This

is why man has an insatiable natural urge to acquire spiritual knowledge (Mantzarides 19).

Cooperation Between Man and God

To become like God we must cooperate with God. Our "spiritual life is the result of a harmonious divine-human action" (Stylianopoulos 32). Orthodox theologians define the cooperation between God and man as synergy. But in this relationship we depend entirely on the love of God. The Kingdom of Heaven is a gift of the Lord (Grace) prepared for His faithful servants. We are responsible for fulfilling His commandments. We need to fully respond to God, both in faith and works, if we are to share in the fruits of salvation. While God's part in salvation is decisive, and always assured in Christ, each person's part is also indispensable for his or her own individual salvation. One's relationship with God remains free and personal. Our willingness to accept Christ and to follow His ways pleases God. What is the disposition and direction of our hearts? Are we willing to cooperate with God? What and where are our treasures?

The basis of the harmonious cooperation of God and humankind is the New Testament agreement (covenant) affirmed and renewed in each Eucharist which is the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. The New Testament covenant implies the commandment of love (John 13:34) which is a personal and mutual relationship between God and humankind. The covenant is accessible to us through the mystery of the Resurrection and the presence of the spirit (Meyendorff, Living Tradition 30).

“He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

We are obedient servants.

We achieve theosis by subjecting our will to God's will. "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10). We are invited to become like "God by grace" to become one with God, as we cooperate with God for our personal salvation (Stylianopoulos 38). Let God draw you in; God takes us.

“For every one who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God” (John 3:20-21).

The pure in heart and the faithful see and know God. Orthodox theology holds that rediscovery and uncovering our pure heart is the way we come to be with God. "God's gracious action through His word and His spirit . . ." is the means of rediscovery of our spiritual being (Hopko, et al. God and Charity 5)

"The pure in heart see God everywhere, within their own nature and in everything that God has made. The pure in heart know that 'the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isaiah 6:3). The pure in heart are capable of seeing and believing, of believing and coming to know" (Hopko, et al. 6).

"The knowledge of God is given to those willing to know" (Hopko, et al. 7). Christ helps us put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of the Creator (Colossians 2:3-10). The Orthodox writer, the Elder Silouan wrote, The Lord is not made known through learning, but by

the Holy Spirit. "Jesus Christ renews the nature of man by sanctifying and sealing it with the spirit of God. It is by the Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father and is sent into the world through the Son, that human beings come to know and exalt God" (Hopko, et al. 12).

Spiritual renewal is the process for growth and transformation into the image of God. We focus on the Trinity as we go up and down the spiritual ladder. As we move from Glory to Glory, we move closer to the image of God. This transformation is accomplished through divine grace, human freedom and the gift of the Holy Spirit given us at baptism, Chrismation and through the Father. The Holy Spirit is never lost to us. "The sacramental life -- 'The Life in Christ' -- is thus seen to be an unceasing struggle for the acquisition of that grace which must transfigure nature As we aspire to be united with God, the gift of grace shifts and varies according to the fluctuations of the infirmities of the human will" (Lossky 180). The climb upward on our spiritual ladder is sometimes shaky.

THE CHURCH

"The Church of the living God exists on earth" It is a sacramental and Eucharistic community. "It is one Church, with the unity of God, holy with the thrice Holy Lord, catholic with the boundless fullness of His divine being and life, and apostolic with His own divine mission. It is eternal life, God's kingdom on earth, salvation itself" (Hopko, et al. 20). God invites us to ascend our spiritual ladder from Glory to Glory through His Church. The Liturgy is the process through which we learn about orthodox spirituality and renewal. The Church brings us into God's time, God's place, and God's presence. The Church gives us daily and yearly liturgical cycles in order to relate to God. The Church sets forth practices: "prayer, worship, fasting, attentiveness, struggle, temperance, confession of sins, participation in the sacramental life particularly the Eucharist" all leading us toward the transfigured life (Harakas 37). We grow whole in Christ within the cycles of the Church.

Christ and His Church are the answer to the crying needs of the world. We are the witness of this conviction through service, ministry and love. Our actions and energy demonstrate to the world how the needs of the world are satisfied by Christ and His Church "not in words and speech, but in deeds and in truth" (Hopko Fullness 72).

As members of the Body of Christ, our participation in the Church is communal because the Triune God is present in the community through the Holy Spirit. We the Body have renewed the seal of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) and are taught in the spirit (1 Corinthians 2:3).

Our absolute, unique human person is guaranteed and perfected through communal existence with others. We become more and more ourselves as we become more and more an incomparable and externally valuable member of the community which is the Body of Christ (Meyendorff, Living Tradition 184). True community is achieved only by the abandonment of self to love for others. A person discovers himself and others by forsaking his or her self and by living for others, with others, and even "in" others, with compassionate, co-suffering love. We are whole in community. We are closer to the image of God in community. Our world needs this understanding.

Authority in the Church

The Body of Christ is directed by the authority of Christ who teaches us to follow His commandments through love (Matthew 22:35-40). Because the living presence of the risen Christ is in our midst, there is no authority over the community. Christ and the community are identified together. Authority in the

Orthodox Church is established and confirmed at Pentecost by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the apostolic witnesses to the historical events of the life of Jesus. The community, the Body, preserved the apostolic message in its original purity and continues the missionary and pastoral ministry with the Bishops.

In the Church everything occurs within the sacramental framework of the Eucharistic assembly whose president, the Bishop, is an image of the Lord and is called to express the will of God. The Bishop expresses the nature of the community. The continuity of the episcopal office in each community preserves the message of the apostles (Meyendorff, Living Tradition 32).

The Bishop's ministry is to be in charge of defining the historical continuity and consistency of the Christian Gospel and tradition. He defines the unity of the faith and sacramental communion. Only he has the full authority and power to speak in the name of the Body. The Body speaks through the Bishop. The Bishop never speaks for himself, he speaks in the name of the Church.

Christ through Apostolic Succession gives the Bishop the full power to teach, to witness the catholic experience of the Body of the Church. The Bishop of the Church is a teacher.

But the whole Body is the Guardian of the Church. (Therefore the "royal priesthood," laypersons, also have a role and responsibility for judging the teachings of the Bishop.) The spirit makes the community the Body of Christ. Inside the Body, God not only speaks to us, but He also makes us speak out His will. Baptized members of the Body are participants in God within the Church and are to freely and responsibly participate in the life of the Church. The teaching of the Bishop finds its limits in the expression of the whole Church (Florovsky 1:54). The Church is called to witness this experience, which is a spiritual vision.

The clergy, laity and hierarchy have different functions and gifts within the Church. They are the gifts within the Church. They are the gifts of the same Spirit given for the glory and unity of the Church. The ecclesiastical conscience includes the clergy, laity and hierarchy. The Church works in a conciliarly way.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The purpose of religious education is to impart upon the laity, clergy and hierarchy the truths, continuity, unity and patterns of our faith, so that we can grow in the Image of God. Religious education helps us grow in His Image by developing our sensitivities to receive God's love, to be open to His self-manifestation and revelation which strengthens our faith. Through faith and religious education we learn how to pray, to be obedient to God's way and to have integrity. With these elements in hand, we can actively serve our fellow human beings and overcome evil. Clergy, laity and hierarchy are truly servants of the Lord.

The first conclusion of the commission for an Archdiocesan Theological Agenda states, "We must focus resources and attention upon the developing of a spiritually formed membership. This means much more attention to all aspects of Church life as it touches personal, ecclesial and outreach dimensions of our existence. It means priority attention to education and spiritual formation on all levels" ("Commission" 34:3:305). The laity must insist that these task force conclusions be implemented. Spiritual renewal is why the Church exists. In order to cope with the secular world forces around us it is

imperative that the Archdiocese make its priority "Extending the Benefit of Theological Education Beyond the Ordained Ministry to the People of God" (Harakas, qtd.in Patsavos).

What Do We Think About Spiritual Renewal In Our Time And Place?

In order to connect with and understand what other brothers and sisters think about Orthodox Spiritual Renewal, a questionnaire on the topic was prepared and mailed to a select group of 300 Orthodox Christians. A questionnaire enables one to see consensus and involves others in the process, which is a conciliar approach and within the tradition of the Church. It also enables us to see how those of us living in the United States today, in the two thousand year old tradition of the Church, fit into the context of the Church's understanding of Spiritual Renewal, which is outlined in the first half of this discussion.

A response rate of 10-15% to a questionnaire is considered good. Our response rate was 35%! The quality of responses and vigilant consideration given to each answer is a witness to the Holy Spirit working with the Orthodox church. Two responses are reprinted in their entirety with the approval of the authors. These two, in particular, capture what the others were saying, but these authors chose to be more complete in their responses. They represent the discernment used by all the other respondents. Thank you to all who responded!

Overview of Results

A few generalizations gleaned from the responses are presented.

The responses came from all geographic areas of the United States: Oregon, California, Illinois, Wisconsin, Maryland, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, Florida, Texas, Utah, District of Columbia, and other states too.

Three percent (3%) of the respondents were clergy.

Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the respondents demonstrated an understanding of Spiritual Renewal in the tradition of the teachings of the Church. A representative sample of the meaning of Spiritual Renewal follows:

Spiritual Renewal Means:

- "[A] rebirth of love for Christ and our Orthodox Christian faith in the hearts and minds of all our people, clergy and laity"
- "[C]ontinued growth to attain "Theosis" through the Church, which is the vehicle"
- "Christ-centered contemplation"
- "[B]ut we all . . . are being transformed (renewed) . . . by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). A personal experience/relationship with God's Holy Spirit, bringing Spiritual Renewal."

- "Thy will be done . . . for me personally it was similar to the story of the prodigal Son's repentance when He returned to His Father"
- "[O]ffering our people incentives and stimulation to re-evaluate their commitment to our Church and to Christ"
- "[A]ctive participation in the full sacramental life of the Church. For the baptized Orthodox Christian, this means full participation in Holy Confession, Holy Communion and an active personal prayer life. The motive for the Christian would be just one - Jesus commanded this and I believe and love Him."
- "[L]earning to live more fully with Christ at the center of life and family"

Consensus on Education and Involvement

The questionnaire revealed an overwhelming consensus on two points:

1. Eighty-five percent (85%) believe that lifelong education in our Church should be the number one priority for clergy, laity and hierarchy. Spiritual Renewal is directly related to religious education. At the end of the twentieth century, Orthodox Christians in the United States still have an insatiable natural urge to acquire spiritual knowledge as Gregory Palamas taught.

Education

- "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).
- "Seminarians are to receive full, complete thorough Theological training in addition to a well-rounded education of secular studies" (The library at Holy Cross needs to be the concern of all of us who care about the Church).
- "Train our priests in a legitimate seminary with Orthodox views with the intent to be priests rather than academicians and/or businessmen."
- "Some Bishops are very strong in their personal views". (Bishops speak for the Church. They should not speak personally.)
- "Educate the laity and serve them" Do not be "arrogant and try to dictate to them."
- "The hierarchy seems to have lost touch with the individual Church member."
- "Priests need continuing education."
- "Educate converts"
- "Teaching all the things that Jesus taught, in English." (40% of the respondents volunteered that the use of English is an educational issue and essential to Spiritual Renewal. "You can not be

spiritually involved in services you cannot understand.")

- "The people need to hear more than the 52 Gospels and 52 Epistles repeated century after century."
- "The laity have a responsibility to learn their faith, practice their beliefs and support parish programs that promote Spiritual Renewal, through Bible studies, charity work, etc. Their role is to their Church more than a Greek social club."
- "Teach Christ above human categories (language, ethnicity, culture, etc.)"
- "[T]o educate the laity about the Theology and traditions of the faith."
- "Adult education should be stressed because it helps us clarify the beliefs that lead us to Spiritual Renewal."
- "We should encourage writers to prepare Orthodox literature." (utilize and pay retired clergy to translate sacred texts into English) "This encouragement includes both the purchase of literature by Churches and grants for new literature."
- "[E]ncourage women Orthodox writers since there is a lack of this type of literature."
- "Religious literature should be easily available and cover a wide range of subjects."
- "[W]orkshops for parish council members so they can be Church leaders."
- "Organize study/seminars to train lay teachers."
- "The role of the laity is to avail themselves of . . . opportunities to learn and worship and develop a personal prayer life."

Involvement - Shared Ministry

- "Laity have an equal claim in the Holy Spirit."
- "Laity want to share in full responsibilities in the life of the Church at all levels."
- "We have one master, Jesus Christ. All others must serve in unity, compassion and understanding to renew a faltering Church."
- "Expressing a genuine concern for each other and our feelings in the name of Christ."
- "We cannot assume that everyone shares the same concept of what ministry is. Therefore, a clear and concrete definition has to be established before we enter into the idea of syndiakonia/ shared ministry. Ministry needs to be defined in generalized terms so that all of God's People

can be part of it. I suggest that ministry is the concrete and constructive expression of Christ when two or more people gather in His name. I believe the real issue is developing ministry, rather than education."

Liturgical Involvement

- "Meaningful, active participation in the full sacramental life of the Church"
- "Liturgical participation - laity need to learn and be encouraged to participate in the Liturgy - to me, this means less reliance on formal choirs and more emphasis on simply sung responses by the entire congregation. The difference in feeling the liturgy or just being a spectator is tremendous."
- "Parishes should be instructed by clergy to sing the responses in the liturgy. Passive sitting and watching a performance should be eliminated from Orthodox Churches."
- "Women should be allowed to chant." (Young women should serve in altar and be lay readers.)
- "Clergy should share the ministry."
- "Laity need to take on ministries."

Community Involvement

- "Develop strong outreach programs that get parishioners involved in helping others, thereby giving them a chance to practice what their religion preaches."
- "Reach out into the peripheries of our congregations to bring people in, and together to make them feel a part of the whole" "More participation in the community outside the Church."
- "Act jointly in support of member needs and problems."

Administration

- "[S]taffing of parishes - we need paid staff to meet the needs of the community. One person can't do everything."
- "Participation of professional and volunteers in parish life."
- "First we need administrative renewal. We have a crisis of leadership. Bishops must be elected by the people, clergy and laity . . . from the most qualified candidates, celibate or married." (Laity need to participate in election of archbishop and participate in synods and councils.)
- "[N]ew church leadership, to set the tone."

- "[A]dministration is not elected . . . it does not rotate (stagnation). Money is the primary reason for appointment."
- "Real legislative authority for clergy-laity conferences. Greater lay input in the selection of archdiocesan council members."
- "Presently only one voice is heard - no chance of many voices contributing to make the one."
- "Hierarchy is now dominating with advice only from an appointed cadre . . . if all are the Body of Christ, the ultimate authority is the people. The historic Church is conciliar - all working harmoniously together for the Glory of God." (Seventy-five percent (75%) believe the Church administration from parish, diocese, archdiocese needs to use conciliar approaches.)
- "Providing honest information to all concerned about Church matters . . . honesty is a spiritual matter."
- "Establish an American Orthodox Church on conciliar basis with a clear commitment to renewal . . . empower parish clergy and laity to act."

Summary

The OCL survey shows that there is overwhelming agreement on the part of the laity concerning what the priorities of the Church should be:

1. Lifelong religious education should be the first priority;
2. Reinvolving the laity in the Church - sharing the ministry should be the second priority.

OCL will use its resources to make these priorities a reality in the Orthodox Church of the Twenty-First Century!

Response to Questionnaire

from Nancy C. McNeil - Waco, Texas

Nancy is a full-time mother. She has been an art teacher and graphic artist. She sings in her Church choir.

1. I received this questionnaire on Holy Wednesday - an appropriate time to reflect on spiritual renewal. I pray that I will be spiritually and physically renewed this evening as I participate in the Holy Unction. I believe that I am spiritually renewed each time I prepare and receive Holy Eucharist. I think that on a personal level spiritual renewal is an ongoing discipline involving prayer, education and participation.

For the church as a whole, the concept of spiritual renewal takes on a corporate view of this set of disciplines. It involves the Christian community actively renewing its life in Christ or the

living faith. The Church should be involved in providing guidance and education for living one's faith and activities in which to participate in the life of Christ. It must also engender a spirit of participation.

In talking about spiritual renewal of the Church, I also include spiritual renewal of the clergy and hierarchy both on an individual and corporate level.

1. My list seems to focus more on elements of the Church that need to be reviewed rather than just renewed.

First and foremost, I see a great need for more and better education of our laity - and some priests. In many places, the need exists for basic education e.g., reading and using the Bible, understanding the Liturgy and other services of the Church, understanding the Sacraments of the Church. In all places we need to make available the wonderful resources of the Orthodox faith. It was through my non-Orthodox husband that I was introduced to the Philokalia! What an incredible source of spiritual guidance. Through the book store run by the Y.A.L. in Houston I came to know Mother Maria of Normandy and Father Schmemmann. On a Y.A.L. retreat I was introduced to the work of Father Florovsky. All parishes need access to this type of material whether by library, exchange library, book store, classes, etc.

Secondly, I think we need to review some of the social activities within the Church. I have a hard time sensing spiritual community when I see things like trips to horse races, casino nights, etc. advertised by different groups in the Church bulletin. In fact the plethora of raffles in the church these days bothers me. I do not mind groups loosely associated with the Church community doing these activities e.g., AHEPA, Daughters of Penelope. I do not believe they have a place at church or in Church publications. Likewise I don't think it is helpful when church organizations engage in activities that promote or allow excessive behaviors such as drunkenness (as at a Food Festival) or \$100 per plate dinners. I enjoy social events at church, yet I think they must be held within the context of living our faith and therefore they must attempt to be an outstanding example of, if you will, "good clean Christian fun!"

Finally, I see a need to renew or, in some instances, establish sources for spiritual enrichment. By this I mean retreats, Bible study groups, prayer groups/breakfasts, conferences. Annunciation Church in Houston holds an annual winter retreat for the women of the parish. They bring in a guest speaker and spend two nights and one full day in a retreat center. Here the participants have a wonderful opportunity to reflect on, learn more about, grow in and share their faith. I would propose that retreats of this type should be available to all parishioners, perhaps provided through cooperation and organization on a regional basis. Within each parish, I think that many opportunities should be available for spiritual growth and renewal. These could include Bible study groups, adult "Sunday School" classes, one day retreats, etc. On a larger scale each region of the U.S. has a choir federation and most of these, if not all, hold an annual conference. I would like to see these organizations raise the level of spiritual awareness within their conferences or organize retreats for their members.

In short, in almost every aspect of Church life there are elements that need to be reviewed and renewed.

2. Causing spiritual renewal is an interesting idea. As a group, as an institution, we can engender a desire for spiritual renewal, but I don't believe we can effectively cause spiritual renewal to happen. As I noted in my response to a preceding question, I think the corporate church needs to provide the instruments, activities, guidance to engender and aid personal spiritual renewal.

Father Florovsky speaks of the necessity and appropriateness of "fixed formularies of worship" in his article *The Worshipping Church*. I think what he has to say can apply to Church activities as a whole not merely the liturgical aspects. He states that it is "spiritually dangerous to neglect the 'books,' The settled formulae not only help to fix attention, but also feed the heart and mind of the worshippers. . . ." This is how the Church can "cause" spiritual renewal. By providing "food" for the hearts and minds of its members, the Church can "set the table" of spiritual renewal.

3. I think the laity has the greatest role and responsibility in the spiritual renewal of our church. Without each individual commitment to spiritual renewal, i.e. without individual participation in prayer, confession, communion, there is no renewal of the Church at large. I pass on the following in support of lay involvement and responsibility.

In talking about the mission of the Orthodox Church, Father Alexander Schmemmann calls for a "movement" of the laity to "fulfill the tasks that institutions alone cannot and must not fulfill." He further discusses the spiritual profile of this movement and notes that he sees it based upon three specific vows. This is what he says in elaboration:

Prayer: The first vow is to keep a certain well-defined spiritual discipline of life, and this means a rule of prayer: an effort to maintain a level of personal contact with God, what the Fathers call the 'inner memory of Him.' It is very fashionable today to discuss spirituality and to read books about it. But whatever the degree of our theoretical knowledge of spirituality, it must begin with a simple and humble decision, an effort, and - what is the most difficult - regularity. Nothing indeed is more dangerous than pseudo-spirituality whose unmistakable signs are self-righteousness, pride, readiness to measure other people's spirituality, and emotionalism.

What the world needs now is a generation of men and women not only speaking about Christianity, but living it.

Father Schmemmann's second vow is obedience, which he sees as the antithesis of hysterical individualism. Finally, the third vow of the lay movement should be acceptance or accepting precisely what God wants us to do. He notes that "It is very significant that ascetic literature is full of warnings against changing places, against leaving monasteries for other and 'better' ones, against the spirit of unrest, that constant search for the best external conditions."

Father Schmemmann then discusses the goals of this lay movement and he states,

The first goal would be to help people . . . to experience and to live their Orthodox faith. We all know there exists today a real discrepancy between the Orthodox ideal of the Church . . . of liturgical life - and reality. There must be a place, a situation, where this ideal can be tasted, experienced, lived, be it only partially and imperfectly. Here the experience of other Orthodox movements is conclusive. It is because their members experienced - at their conferences,

retreats, study groups - the joy and the meaning of Church life that they could witness to it and call to the Church "at large."

4. I see the role of the clergy and hierarchy as empowerers, assistants, guides and examples.
5. a. As I have previously noted, I see the laity's role and responsibility in spiritual renewal as most important. Therefore, they need to be able to work in conjunction with and in harmony with the clergy and hierarchy. Without involvement of all three entities - laity, clergy and hierarchy - I don't believe a true and complete spiritual renewal of the Church can be achieved.

b. When, within a monarchical administration, there is only direction from the top down and there is no inclusion of all entities within administrative functioning, then the model doesn't seem to work. In parishes where the laity seek all solutions and answers from the priest or other hierarchy, there seems to be a rather lifeless sense of community as opposed to those parishes where the laity take an active role in problem solving and resolution making.

(How would you restructure the Church to encourage Spiritual Renewal?)

1. I am not sure of my answer here. I think I see not so much a need for restructuring as a need for reinvolvement. My problem here is that I am not particularly well-versed in the "structure" of the church. My response comes from having seen parishes within the present structure that can and do encourage spiritual renewal while others seem to lie spiritually comatose. So my question becomes what is it that makes some parishes "work" spiritually while others do not? My experience seems to dictate that it is not the structure per se but the parish's particular view of the structure. And most importantly it is, again, the lay involvement in the "structure."

Response to Questionnaire:

Joint effort of Albert Alexander and Dr. Susan Alexander.

Albert and Susan coordinated the Feeding the Hungry Program at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda Maryland. Albert is a career civil servant. He is a foreign trade specialist at the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. Susan is a professor of sociology and is presently writing a book on attitudes in the popular press concerning immigrants and immigration.

1. Spiritual renewal means commitment to actions which strengthen and emphasize the primary role of the church as an instrument of religion and spirituality. While strong fellowship among parishioners is desirable and should be encouraged, fellowship should stem primarily from bonds of common religious belief. The Church should not be misused as a vehicle for maintaining ethnicity or as a locus for social activities to the extent that it overwhelms and distorts the Church's dominant spiritual character.
2. Most parishes include elements of Church life that (1) provide activities for men, women, young adults, and teenagers; (2) administration and finance (Parish Council and supporting committees); (3) education (Sunday School, discussion groups, Bible study, etc.) Too often these elements are focused primarily on the business affairs of the parish (fund raising, building and maintenance) or activities that are purely social or ethnic in character. Such activities are

important and necessary but they should not be allowed to be the core of parish life.

To attain the full meaning of Church life, all parish activities should aim to encourage regular attendance (and participation) at the Divine Liturgy and other religious services, community/charitable service to the community at large both within and outside the Orthodox community, and increased efforts to spread knowledge and understanding of the Orthodox Christian faith to the non-Orthodox.

3. (3-8) With regard to structure, roles and responsibilities, I would like to offer some general observations.

Both the laity and the clergy (including the hierarchy) have roles to play in the spiritual renewal to the Church. I do not have an opinion on what structure works best but an essential ingredient in any successful organizational relationship is that the participants have democratic opportunity to express opinions and views and that the organization has the flexibility to change when it is clear that the majority desire change and it would be of benefit. There must be opportunity for dialogue and the structure must be responsive to the views of the individuals and groups that make up the Church. I am not well-informed enough to judge what that structure should be.

Spiritual renewal is best achieved through "grass roots" and spiritual renewal of each individual Orthodox Christian. Currently, there is a good deal of holiness in the Church. But its potential for being a greater spiritual force is hindered by the tendency of traditional, born-in-the-faith Orthodox to regard the Church as a closed club for ethnically-correct persons who make a nominal appearance at Christmas and Easter.

The surest way to cause and achieve a spiritual renewal in the Church as a whole is for each individual to live his/her Orthodox Christian faith in a manner that sets an example that others cannot resist following. We cannot reform a body unless the individual members of that body reform themselves first. The most efficient organization is empty if it is not at base true to its ideals and is made up of persons who gain the respect of others and thereby influence others far beyond their numbers. This is what I perceive what OCL is attempting to do.

CONCLUSION

OCL and Commission: Archdiocesan Theological Agenda

The "Committee on Spiritual Renewal, Decisions of the 22nd Clergy - Laity Congress, Chicago, Illinois, June 30 - July 7, 1974" left us a list of recommendations for renewal. The recommendations were not implemented as policy. The insights and findings of the commission titled "Archdiocesan Theological Agenda," published in 1989 in the Greek Orthodox Theological Review, are excellent. Why did it take so long to circulate this study to the Body of the Church? Could it be that the Orthodox Observer decided to print the study, Winter, 1991, because OCL has raised similar issues? Nevertheless, the laity need to become familiar with the findings of the Commission so that clergy, laity and hierarchy can work together for their implementation.

Orthodox Christian Laity supports the study as a blueprint for Spiritual Renewal and reordering

priorities within the Orthodox Church. OCL has advocated these priorities since its founding in 1988 and the enclosed survey also reinforces the commission study. The challenge is how can we work together to translate these insights and truths into Church policy? If we don't work together, the findings will go the way of the Orthodox-Catholic Commission on Marriage - nowhere!

We reprint the Commission's conclusion because our survey demonstrates there is a consensus on priorities. We have a take-off point for entering the Twenty-First Century. It should be noted that the OCL survey reinforces the commission's first priority, i.e. implementing syndiakonia.

- "Our survival and growth as a Church depends on lifting up four major concerns and opportunities for future policy direction."
- "First, we must focus resources and attention upon the developing of a spiritually formed membership. This means much more attention to all aspects of Church life as it touches personal, ecclesial, and outreach dimensions of our existence. It means priority attention to education and spiritual formation on all levels." The OCL task force reinforces this conclusion and it is our number one priority along with redefining the role of the laity in the life of the Church.
- "Secondly, we must focus resources and attention upon the parish, the focus of the religious, cultural and spiritual life of our Church. Vigorous, informed, participatory parish life is a key to the future of the Church."
- "Thirdly, the leadership of our Church especially the hierarchy and the presbyters, need to find ways to understand their roles in ways which focus resources and attention on the conciliar understanding of the life of the Body of Christ, and to emphasize their facilitative role in building up the people of God. Inevitably this will demand changes in role expectations in regard to the laity and lead to increased concern with Pan-Orthodox cooperation and unity." This is the second priority of OCL based on the enclosed survey information.

Finally, an honest assessment of our number and the realities of inter-marriage demand serious reflection and reorientation of basic assumptions about our identity and the future course of our Archdiocese. A firm, clear and unequivocal acceptance of the social realities in which we live need not mean an abandonment of our ethnic heritage, but like many other ethnic groups in America, it will be preserved only within the framework of a larger commitment to the Orthodox Christian faith (Review 34:305-06).

CALL TO ACTION: IMPLEMENTING PRIORITIES

The OCL task force on Spiritual Renewal concludes with a call to action! The laity can help restore Orthodox tradition and vitality by getting reinvolved and working to implement the priorities outlined in the task force studies. Our grandparents were involved. They established the Church in this country before there was a Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. They struggled, uprooted from their homeland and families, overcoming material obstacles, to establish the faith here. Three generations later in our overwhelming affluence the Church has been reduced to a social club and lobby of disjointed interests - more secular than spiritual - under the direction of the Archdiocese. This state of affairs is the result of

inadequate religious education and misguided priorities.

The Church will once again become a vital spiritual force in the United States of America when the laity re-establish the harmony of shared ministry in the Church as expressed by respondents from the questionnaire.

- "Pray to God continuously for renewal. Begin with oneself - true repentance. Witness the Orthodox way of life with love and humility."
- "The distorted notion of separation between clergy and laity must be completely rejected."
- "Renewal process will never occur as long as the laity are left out of the process as is now the case."

PRIORITIES RECOMMENDED

By Spiritual Renewal Task Force:

1. A properly educated clergy is fundamental to the life of the Church. Seminarians must receive a thorough theological training coupled with a well-rounded program of secular studies. Regular programs of continuing education must be required of all clergy.
2. The laity have an equal responsibility to learn their faith, practice their beliefs and support programs in their parishes for Spiritual Renewal, including study groups, organized retreats, and charity work.
3. The Holy Cross Seminary and in particular its library and publishing activities must become a high priority of the Archdiocese in commitment of resources and attention. The school must be held to the highest academic standards of comparable American colleges and universities.
4. Holy Cross Seminary should organize extension programs and continuing education programs to facilitate both continuing education for clergy and lay education. The seminary should seek formal academic accreditation of these programs.
5. Formal education programs should be established to welcome and educate converts into the Orthodox faith.
6. The seminary and the Archdiocese should encourage active scholarship in Orthodoxy in the seminary, but also in non-Orthodox universities. Foundations and private donors should be encouraged to fund such scholarship.
7. Special efforts must be made to encourage scholarship by and about women in the Orthodox Church.
8. There should be organized training and educational programs for the orientation of Parish Council members.

9. The laity should be encouraged to take an active role in the liturgical life of the community rather than be passive observers of the liturgy. The parish should be encouraged to sing the responses in the liturgy.
10. The use of English in the liturgy and in instruction is necessary for the spiritual growth of the community.
11. There needs to be special emphasis on the spiritual growth of persons in mixed marriages and of their children.

Orthodox Women and Our Church

By Eva C. Topping

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female.

INTRODUCTION

However ancient its roots and however powerful its traditions, no church is today an island unto itself. This is no less true of the Orthodox Church than of its sister churches. From its apostolic beginnings to the present day the Orthodox Church has profoundly both shaped and been shaped by history. It cannot be otherwise.

Like other Christian communities of faith, the Orthodox Church exists in time and space. It owes its location on earth and its temporal existence to Christ, the founder. In order to establish the Church, God descended from heaven to earth, became human (as proclaimed in the Creed) "and lived among us" (John 1:14). God and the Church thus entered the history of humankind. Through two millennia Orthodox Christians have never escaped from the here and now. Nor can we today. Modern technology has turned our country of two hundred and fifty million souls into a single neighborhood, our planet into a global village.

Our Church, the Body of Christ, moreover, does not consist of robots. Rather, it is composed of women and men made of flesh and blood, each generation of which lives in a particular time and place. In each generation, therefore, the Church faces challenges and changes imposed by a particular historical and cultural context. In one way or another, it is inevitably affected and compelled to respond, whether negatively or positively. The Church does not exist in a vacuum.

From the new experiences of men and women arise new questions, demanding answers. Frequently, old answers are inadequate, sometimes even useless. What is then required of our Church is the open minded re-examination and creative use of its historical experience and sacred traditions.

Located in the United States in the closing decade of the twentieth century, our Church cannot and dares not ask for whom the bell tolls. To ask this question is to put the future and welfare of Orthodoxy in this country at risk in the third millennium.

The woman's movement is now universally recognized as a dominant sign of our times (Behr-Sigel 106-11). In most of the Christian oikoumene feminists are ringing the bell inside the Church itself. Once raised, the issue of women's place and role in the ecclesial body cannot be laid aside, stonewalled, unanswered.

That this bell tolls today as loudly for the Orthodox Church as it does for other churches can no longer be denied. As recently as a decade ago it was deemed extraneous to Orthodoxy. Like the "evil generation" of Pharisees and Sadducees, however, we too must heed the Lord's warning to "interpret the signs of the times" (Matthew 16:1-4).

Orthodox women have ears that hear and eyes that see the changes around them. Better educated and living in a more open egalitarian society, they have choices undreamed of by their grandmothers and mothers. Outside their Church they are experiencing an equality and a sense of personhood new in the history of humankind. Once upon a time it was not possible for Orthodox women either to express alienation or to leave their Church. Thanks to enormous economic, political and social changes, that time no longer exists. For our Church to pretend otherwise will prove dangerous.

More and more Orthodox Christian women are questioning their present subordinate status, their restricted participation in the rich liturgical and sacramental life of our Church. Each day their number increases. Their voices grow stronger. One Orthodox woman theologian writes of the "mental anguish" and "spiritual crisis" endured by women of our Church because of ancient traditions which marginalize them. Another refers to the "gap" that separates the "theoretical" Orthodox Church from the "real" Orthodox Church. Orthodox women of faith are asking whether or not our Church really believes that women are created in the divine image. The Scriptures and Orthodox theology answer their question with a "yes." But when Orthodox women here and now attend our Church, they experience a "no" which causes them pain and alienation.

The empirical reality of women's lives in the Church thus exposes a serious contradiction between what the Church proclaims and what it practices. Nor can it any longer be hidden under a mystifying bushel of obfuscations or justified by newly-minted theologies which lack biblical and patristic pedigrees.

In 1982, Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon (second only to the Ecumenical Patriarch in the hierarchy of the ecumenical throne) confessed publicly that within the Orthodox Church "internal dialogue" on the question of women in the Church was deficient (Behr-Sigel 162). In the nine years since then the situation he described has not significantly changed. It is therefore time to encourage and broaden this much-needed "internal dialogue." That is the hope and purpose of this paper.

It is, of course, not possible to discuss here all aspects of the contradiction between Orthodoxy's theology and its praxis in regard to women. This contradiction is now almost two thousand years old. Nor is it possible to answer all the questions involved in the issue of women in the Orthodox Church. Our history is too long, our traditions too many, our theology too complex, our experiences too varied.

To produce even a general overview of "Orthodox Women and our Church" presents daunting challenges. One pen can hardly do more than raise some questions, suggest a few answers and make some recommendations. This may, however, prove useful as the Orthodox Church in the United States prepares for the third millennium. Guided always by the divine light of the Holy Spirit, we can succeed in transforming our Church into a "spiritual house" of "living stones" (I Peter 2:5), female and male.

Informed discussion followed by action is imperative. Orthodox women will not forever wait silently and patiently for the "new creation" (II Corinthians 5:17) in which discrimination based on gender has been abolished. At stake is not only the equality and full humanity of women within the ekklesia. Beyond this, the spiritual and sacramental wholeness of the Body of Christ is also at stake.

DIAKONIA

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord, and there are a variety of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

I Corinthians 12:4-6

The record of women's service or diakonia in the Church provides a useful perspective for discussing Orthodox women's roles and status. This splendid record ought to be better known.

Orthodox women belong to an ancient sisterhood. For two thousand years it has honorably and sacrificially served the Church. Not only have the gifts of women always been varied, historically, their roles have been far more diversified than at present. This is a very important point.

Women have been disciples, apostles, evangelists, deacons, miracle-workers, missionaries and prophets. They have preached, composed hymns, taught and healed. Women have built and endowed churches and monasteries. They have established and maintained countless philanthropic institutions everywhere in the Orthodox oikoumene. Essentially an extension of women's domestic responsibilities, philanthropy has always been considered a proper "feminine" activity for women of the Church.

In times of ecclesiastical crises, women always proved to be defenders of Orthodoxy. Powerful, "Christ-loving" empresses of Byzantium convened and dominated three important ecumenical councils (Ephesus 431; Chalcedon 451; and Nicea II 787). Empress Theodora "restored" Orthodoxy in 843. Imperial defenders of the faith, Pulcheria, Irene and Theodora added immortal haloes to their bejeweled crowns.

For almost two millennia, women have served the Church as monastics, unceasingly praying for the salvation of humankind. In fact, the first Christian monastics were women. Among them are the "desert mothers" whose ascetic achievements and wisdom matches those of the celebrated "desert fathers."

Finally, from the time of Nero to Stalin, whenever the Orthodox Church was persecuted, women paid blood tribute for the faith. Orthodoxy's liturgical calendar is sanctified by numerous female martyr saints. For martyrdom knows no gender.

Since the Orthodox Church has apostolic roots, the record of women's diakonia is as old as the ekklesia itself. It begins in the historic community that gathered around Jesus. This first part of women's history in the Church is little known. At the same time, it is of utmost significance.

Mary's son, the young, charismatic rabbi from Nazareth, called women as well as men to "follow" Him. The verb *akoloutho* (follow), with its special New Testament meaning of "to become a disciple," is used of women (Mark 15:41) and men alike. Among others, women like Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:1) received and accepted the call to discipleship. They belonged to Jesus' intimate circle.

Authentic Orthodox tradition recognizes these women as *mathetria* (disciples). In Byzantine sermons and hymns these remarkable foremothers are repeatedly identified as *mathetria* of Jesus. Being His disciples, they shared Jesus' early ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Enrolled singly among the saints of Orthodoxy, these women disciples are also celebrated collectively after Easter on the Sunday of the Myrrbearers.

The equal discipleship of women, their public presence and participation in Jesus' itinerant mission,

represents a radical and scandalous break from traditions of Jewish culture in the first century. At that time, discipleship was restricted to men only. Rabbis were prohibited from teaching women, either privately or publicly. Jesus did both. How He abolished this gender-based discrimination is related in Luke 10:38-42.

Once when Jesus was visiting His friends in Bethany, Martha busied herself with preparations in the kitchen. Her sister Mary, however, "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying" (v.39). A rabbinic phrase, "to sit at someone's feet" meant "to study with a person, to become a disciple." On her own, Mary had assumed a traditionally "male" role. What she was doing was a new experience for women.

Martha then asked the Lord to send Mary back to the pans and pots, to the proper "place" for all females. But He refused, telling Martha, "Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her" (v.42).

The Lord of our Church thus rejected the idea of a single "special" role for women. Recognizing women as persons, He validated their autonomy. Christ offered them new roles, new spaces outside the home. Empowered and encouraged by her Teacher and friend, Saint Mary of Bethany (June 4) claimed a new role for herself. The choice was unconditionally hers alone.

Furthermore, according to the unanimous witness of the four Gospels, it was the women disciples alone who proved to be the true "followers" of the Lord.

Unlike James and John (Mark 10:36-40), no mathetria ever asked for status and power. Unlike Judas (Mark 14:43-46), no mathetria ever denied her Teacher. And unlike all the male disciples who "fled, every one of them" (Mark 14:50) when Jesus was arrested, all the women disciples stayed with Him. They alone went all the way to the Cross and beyond.

Having shared the agony of the Crucifixion, the women disciples were the first to experience the joy of the Resurrection. The Easter story thus belongs to women.

They were the first to see the Risen Lord. From women's lips fell the first triumphant "Christ Is Risen" (Christos Aneste). The women disciples were thus the first to proclaim the good news (evangelion) that Christ had indeed trampled on death by death. The frightened, runaway male disciples first heard the "good news" of the Resurrection from the women.

Orthodox tradition names these faithful women disciples the "first evangelists," thereby acknowledging the primacy of their diakonia. Saint Mary Magdalene (July 22), their leader, is given the unique title of "Apostle to the Apostles." (Topping, Saints 246-55). Without the valid witness of the faithful women disciples there would be no Gospel to preach. The truth of the Christian message ultimately depends on the words of women. With the women's proclamation of the Empty Tomb the Church was born, and this at a time when a woman's word was worth less than nothing.

The four Gospels reveal that discipleship, membership in the community gathered around Jesus, was not gender-prescribed. Open equally to men and women, it depended only on individual commitment to Jesus' liberating vision of a new world order. In it, mutual love and service replace old structures of power and hierarchy: "whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of

Man came not to be served but to serve. . . ." (Mark 10:44-45).

As seen in Acts and the genuine Pauline epistles, Christ's vision of a new order, in which women and men were equal, guided the Apostolic Church, inspiring its communal life and work.

The diakonia of women was unrestricted in the first decades of the Church. Although the whole story is not known, it is nevertheless clear that women participated on equal terms with men in the Church during the first century. It is likewise clear that leadership in the first Christian communities was exercised by women as well as men. If we are to believe the testimony of the New Testament, our Church has founding mothers as well as fathers.

The names and activities of some of the prominent women in the primitive Church were fortunately recorded in the writings of the Evangelist Luke and Saint Paul. They provide evidence that the most important positions of authority and leadership in the fledgling Church were not prohibited to women.

In each church, the apostle exercised the greatest authority (I Corinthians 12:28). Some were women. The greatest of all apostles (not one of the "Twelve"), Saint Paul mentions a number of women whom he valued as co-workers (synergoi, Romans 16:3). Nowhere does Paul ever suggest that they were in any way subordinate to him or that their apostolate differed from his.

Paul calls Jounia an "outstanding apostle" (Romans 16:7). Sharing Paul's admiration for Jounia, Saint John Chrysostom wrote, "Oh, how great is the devotion of this woman that she should be worthy of the title of apostolos" (Migne 60-669).

True to the historical record, the Orthodox Church in fact recognizes a number of women saints as apostolos. These includes Paul's co-workers, Jounia (May 17), Prisca (February 13), Apphia (November 22) and Nympha (February 28).

To these should be added Saints Mary Magdalene (July 22), commissioned by the Risen Lord Himself on the first Easter morning (John 20); Mariamne and Photeine (February 17 and 26 respectively); Thekla (September 24), commissioned by Paul to preach the gospel (in Byzantine art she is depicted holding a book, the attribute of the apostle); and Horaiozele, commissioned by Saint Andrew, the first Patriarch of Constantinople, to continue his apostolate. (Hagioreites 277-78). Accustomed as we are only to the twelve male apostles, the existence of women apostles comes as an unexpected revelation.

In sacred stories and songs, Orthodox tradition preserves and cherishes the memory of women apostles who evangelized the Roman Empire. Like their male colleagues, they traveled, preaching the Word, converting and founding churches. Women apostles performed miracles. Like their male colleagues, they healed the sick, cast out demons and resurrected the dead.

The women apostles feared nothing, not even torture and death. Like Saint Thekla, some were martyred. By their sacrificial deaths they insured the life of the Church and its final triumph over paganism.

Other women received the charism of prophecy and exercised leadership in the primitive Christian congregations. According to Saint Paul (I Corinthians 12:38), prophets ranked second only to the apostles.

At the birth of the Church at Pentecost, fire touched the heads of the women who had gathered with the male disciples in the "upper room" (Acts 1:13-14). Free of gender-bias, the Holy Spirit did not stop first to see whether a male or female body housed a soul: "It allots to each one individually just as the spirit chooses" (I Corinthians 12:11). The biological category of sex has no relevance to the granting of spiritual gifts.

Thus, women as well as men were empowered to prophesy and to speak with authority for God. In Acts 21:8-9 Luke mentions the four famous prophesying daughters of Philip the Evangelist. In them and other women was fulfilled God's promise to "pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17). Women spoke publicly the word of God.

Women also served the primitive church as deacons. The first of a long line of women-deacons in our Church, Phoebe, lived near the city of Corinth. She was a diakonos (Romans 16:1-2), deacon, not a deaconess of the large church at Cenchreae. Entrusted with leadership responsibilities at home and with important missions abroad, Saint Phoebe (September 3) was a church official held in high regard by Paul.

From this and similar evidence, we may conclude that charisms, status and roles in the primitive church were not defined as "male" or "female." Women and men alike practiced Christian diakonia. The role of apostle, prophet, teacher, and deacon, each was open equally to women and men of faith. The Pauline corpus thus presents the luminous image of a vibrant Church which used all the varied gifts of women in a variety of roles to further its salvific mission and to spread the Gospel in a hostile world.

In the beginning, the Church was faithful to the vision of its divine founder. Then it was a koinonia (community) of believers in which distinctions based on class, nationality and sex did not exist. It was for women a rare springtime of promise and fulfillment.

In its deliberations on the question of women's place and participation in the Church, Orthodoxy must look to the model of equal discipleship and diakonia, which Christ established and which the apostolic Church followed.

Full participation of women in the life of the Church, however, did not last long. Restrictions based on gender began to appear already at the end of the first century, as ancient patriarchal patterns, structures and traditions re-asserted themselves in the Christian community.

By the fourth century women had been effectively excluded from leadership and authority in the Church, their diakonia greatly circumscribed. Since then the ecclesial situation for Orthodox women has remained basically the same. A few recent cosmetic changes have not in any way altered traditional structures and practices which discriminate against women.

This, however, is not to say that women's service to the Church ended in the fourth century. Far from it. Women's love of God and loyalty to Orthodoxy has to this day never diminished. Nor has their desire to serve ever wavered. On the contrary. Orthodox women today ask the Church to expand their diakonia, to open to them other ministries that they might use all their many gifts to serve God and God's people.

TRADITIONS

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

The male must always command and the female must everywhere be in second class (en deuterata taxei).

Saint Cyril, (qtd. in Migne 68:1068C)

When Orthodox Christian women ask for symmetry between their diakonia and that of their brothers, they are told that "tradition" has made arrangements which cannot be altered. This answer acts as a stone wall. It prevents discussion. The "tradition" appealed to is seldom, if ever, identified. The premises on which it is built are never explained. This answer also implies that there is one monolithic "tradition" concerning women in the Church. This, however, is not the case.

The Orthodox Church is uniquely blessed with magnificent traditions of spirituality, theology, liturgy, and art. Through its long pilgrimage through history, however, it has also adopted ideologies and practices which are alien to its basic beliefs and dogmas. In time, these also became accepted as "tradition," sacred and eternal. Some of them, "leftover beliefs of a neolithic age," (Behr-Sigel 8) are still operative in the closing decade of this millennium.

As indicated by the above quotations from Genesis and Saint Cyril, there is more than one tradition relative to the nature and "place" of women. One affirms the equality and symmetry of female and male, both created in the divine image and likeness. The other proclaims universal male supremacy and female subordination.

At this point, our Church has to decide which of the two represents Orthodoxy's authentic, sacred Tradition (spelled with a capital "T"). In the process of making the decision, clergy and laity alike must bear in mind Christ's warning against abandoning the "commandment of God" (entolen tou theou) and keeping "human tradition" (paradosin ton anthropon) (Mark 7:8). These words of Christ imply a conflict between the two.

Enunciated in the fifth century by Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, second-class status has for too long been the living reality for Orthodox Christian women. It is their experience today.

Were the Alexandrian patriarch to pay us a pastoral visit, he could quickly ascertain that an all-male clergy and hierarchy still rule the Church. Women do not hold positions of authority and decision-making. In more ways than one, women remain "in second class." Begun early, when Orthodox females are only forty days old, their subordinate status, determined by their sex, lasts a lifetime.

Still in place, this powerful tradition assigning Orthodox women to permanent second-class rests on two premises. (Topping, Mothers 44-45) Bolstered by selected biblical texts and androcentric exegesis, it justifies women's subordination in the Church on two grounds. Through Eve, their "first mother," women are second in the order of creation and first in the order of sin.

According to Genesis 2:21-22, God created Eve out of a rib removed from Adam. Man preceded

woman. The Greek (and Latin) Church Fathers interpreted this text as proof of women's inferiority. The all-wise Creator of the universe had designed women to be lesser than and inferior to men. The text in itself does not support this interpretation.

The inferiority of women, however, was not an idea derived solely from scriptures. It had roots deep in classical Greek culture. For example, Aristotle had taught that every female born was a "deformed male" (*De Generatione Animalium* 782A, 17ff). Accepted as scientific fact in ancient and medieval times, this anti-woman theory was elevated by Christian thinkers into divine law, everlasting and immutable.

Inferiority inevitably implies "weakness." A text from the New Testament provided the proof. A second-century presbyter in Asia Minor described women as the "weaker vessel" (to asthenosteron skeuos) (I Peter 3:7). The alleged "weakness of the female" (to asthenes or he astheneia tou theleos) thereafter became a stock motif in patristic references to women. Femininity was synonymous with weakness.

Time and again in Byzantine hymnography, even the most heroic of Orthodoxy's women-martyrs are reminded that they are genetically the "weaker vessel." (Topping, *Mothers* 61-65) (Their sex was sometimes also described as "rotten" (sathron)). To call a woman a "man" was to give her the highest possible praise. Of all women, the Theotokos alone was spared "feminine" weakness.

The voluminous writings of the Greek Church Fathers amply document their reductionist, negative and demeaning image of women. Women are described as physically, morally and intellectually weaker and inferior to men. It is revealing that Saint Gregory of Nyssa (330-395) hesitated to apply the word "woman" to Makrina, his beloved sister and teacher (Migne 46:960b). (She had transcended the failings common to her sex.)

Chosen at random out of many, a few examples will serve to illustrate the dominant patristic view of women. Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (315-403) attributed to women instability, weak-mindedness and frenzy (Migne 35:800). Saint Cyril (+444) believed "the whole species of females is somewhat slow of understanding." (Migne 74:689B, 691C-692D). This prestigious dogmatic theologian combined fervent devotion to the Theotokos with contempt for all other women.

This phenomenon was not peculiar to Saint Cyril. Orthodox theologians and scholars have commented on it. "The spectacular development of the veneration of the Mother of God was accompanied by a growing and concomitant scorn for Mary's sisters who were condemned to silence and relegated to an inferior place in the ecclesial community." (Behr-Sigel 36).

Although his best friends were women, Saint John Chrysostom (347-407) characterized the female sex as fickle, garrulous, servile, and lacking the capacity to reason (Migne 47:510-511, 59:346, 61:316). He concluded therefore that women are justly confined to undemanding domestic roles, freeing men to manage the important affairs of church and state. (Migne 62:500).

Given this derogatory view of "female nature," it does not surprise that this golden-tongued patriarch of Constantinople categorically excludes all women from the sacramental priesthood. This exclusion, he states, is in accordance with "divine law" (theios nomos). (Jurgens 17, 38).

In the same treatise, Chrysostom alludes to the second premise of the tradition which denies woman equal participation and diakonia in the Church. It is this: women occupy first place in the order of sin (hamartia). That being so, Chrysostom advises priests and bishops that women require greater pastoral care because of their "propensity to sin." (Jurgens 102).

Genesis 3:1-18 provides the proof of women's "primacy" in sin. When Eve ate the forbidden fruit, she became the first sinner. In this anti-woman tradition, Adam is generally exonerated from any responsibility for the disaster in Eden. I Timothy 2:14 identifies Eve as the only sinner: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." Accepting this verdict against Eve, the Church Fathers repeatedly call her the "author," the "instrument," and the "mother" of sin. Because Eve is named the single parent of sin, all her female descendants have been sentenced to eternal submission, silence and subordination to the superior, stronger sex. (Again, the Theotokos is the lone exception.)

According to this male-centered tradition, in contrast to all women, all men do not have a "propensity to sin". Consequently, some men can enter the priesthood, but no woman. The exclusion of women is total, categorical. In the blunt words of Saint John Chrysostom, "let the whole female sex retreat from such a task" (the priesthood)." (Jurgens 17).

Such are the premises of an entrenched androcentric ideology which stereotypes half of the Body of Christ as weak, inferior and sinful. As a result, women are judged unfit to participate fully in the "royal priesthood" (basileion hierateuma), to which all baptized Christians are called (I Peter 2:9). (Topping, Mothers 102-21) Because of their sex, women are considered to be less "royal" and less "priestly" than their fathers, brothers and sons.

Sanctified by certain biblical texts, interpreted with a bias against women and buttressed by the immense authority of the Church Fathers, this tradition has, from the fourth century to the present, prevailed over the one which reflects Christ's teachings and praxis. Consequently, Orthodox women today are where Saint Cyril long ago put them, "in second class."

Nevertheless, despite the remarkable staying-power of this sexist ideology, Orthodoxy's authentic tradition remains in place. Asserting women's dignity and equality, it invalidates the traditional superior male/inferior female, ruler/subject model. In contrast to the tradition which was made by men (to preserve power and privileges), the Sacred Tradition of our Church projects a positive image of women.

Two fundamental teachings of the Orthodox Church undergird this Tradition.

First, at the spiritual core that distinguished Orthodoxy from other branches of Christianity is the unshakable belief that the divine "image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26) exists within every person, female and male, without exception. This belief has biblical foundation: "So God created humankind (anthropon) in his image (kat'eikona Theou) . . . male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27). The divine image and likeness which God stamps on human beings is thus the same for male and female. God transcends all human categories, including sex. Likewise, the divine image immanent in women and men lacks gender specificity.

Their misogynist discourse notwithstanding, the Greek Church Fathers of the fourth century placed

Genesis 1:27 at the center of their dynamic theology and anthropology. Saint Gregory of Nazianzos the Theologian (329-389) expressed the passionate and "revolutionary" (Behr-Sigel 91) conviction of the Cappadocian Fathers that women and men share a single, God-given nature and destiny: "There is only one Creator of man and of woman, one dust from which both have come, one image [of God], one law, one death, one resurrection." (Migne 36:289-292). Orthodoxy's authentic tradition has never repudiated this theology.

Saint Basil of Caesarea (330-379) likewise confirms the image of God in women. In his encomium of Saint Joulitta the Martyr (July 30), Basil assigns to her these self-confident words:

We women are taken from the same matter as men, we were created in the image of God like them. Like the masculine sex, the feminine sex is capable of virtue, and this by the will of the Creator. (Behr-Sigel 90).

The great archbishop of Caesarea so completely rejects the assumption that the male represents the norm for humanity that he chooses a woman to proclaim the equal worth and dignity of her sex. It is as if Saint Basil, himself the grandson, son and brother of strong women, wants women to know who they really are. Elsewhere he writes, "Let no woman say, 'I am weak'" (Behr-Sigel 88).

Both of these influential Cappadocian Fathers emphatically reject the patriarchal notion that women have a "special" nature, that they are something "other." In their view, women share one nature (physis) with men.

The Church Fathers, however, were unable to move beyond prevailing patriarchal structures and ethos. Christendom's most brilliant, creative theologians though they were, Saints Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzos, were captives of the traditional androcentric mind-set of their era. On the one hand, they preached the spiritual equality of women. On the other hand, accepting inherited cultural stereotypes, they did nothing to change the unequal status of women, even in the Church.

The three Cappadocian Fathers could not conceive of men and women holding identical positions and sharing identical functions either in society or the Church. However, what was inconceivable to them in the fourth century is both conceivable and realistic to Orthodox Christians standing on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

Theosis (deification) is the second passionately held belief undergirding Orthodoxy's sacred Tradition. God, who assumed "human flesh and dwelled among us" (John 1:14) calls humankind to become "partakers of the divine nature" (theias koinonoi physeos) (II Peter 1:4). Greek patristic tradition understands the message of deification to be the message of salvation. The message is the same for both genders.

From the third century on, the Greek Fathers time and again repeat what was classically stated by Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373): "The Word of God (Logos tou Theou) became human (enanthropeo) that we might be deified" (Migne 25:1928). Through divine grace and love (philanthropia) it is possible for Christians of both genders to become god.

In patristic discussions of theosis, women are never treated separately. Believing that women as well as

men are created in the "divine image and likeness," the Greek Church Fathers do not apply categories of gender to deification. Their vision of human nature and destiny is inclusive. Female persons are not excluded from the divine image. Together with men they receive from the Creator the calling to become god and to achieve holiness: "I said, you are gods." (John 10:34). Like God, holiness is characterized by neither hierarchy nor gender.

By canonizing women, the Orthodox Church does in fact acknowledge that holiness knows no gender. The Church grants the title "holy" (hagia) to countless women, famous and anonymous. From September 1 to August 31 hardly a day of our liturgical calendar exists which is not hallowed by a female saint. Female saints indeed form half of the golden chain that binds Orthodox Christians of all times and places into one living, undivided koinonia.

No Orthodox Christian needs to be reminded that it is a woman who stands pre-eminent among all the saints. Many are holy (hagia/hagios). But only the Theotokos is "All-Holy" (pan-hagia). The Orthodox Church indeed exalts Mary precisely because she is Panagia (All-Holy). (Ware, Orthodox Church 263 n.19).

Through the ages, countless women have been transfigured into living icons of Christ. The haloed heroines in Orthodoxy's pantheon of saints refute the patriarchal image of women as the inferior, weaker and more sinful sex. One has only to read the saints' lives to marvel at women's strength and goodness, their love of God and loyalty to the Church. Shining paradigms of holiness, these women are models to be imitated by all Orthodox Christians, women and men alike.

In the persons of our many "holy mothers," Orthodoxy's authentic Tradition has long since confirmed that the daughters of Eve share equally in the divine image and that they reflect equally the glory of God. The sexist assumptions and conclusions used to maintain women's subordinate status in the Church fail to stand up in the light of Orthodoxy's Tradition of saints.

Finally, Orthodox Tradition embraces the apostolic church which Orthodoxy claims as its origin. In that Church women were not only numerically significant. Sacred history records that they also contributed significantly to the Church as leaders, apostles, deacons, prophets, missionaries and teachers.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances Do not quench the Spirit . . . but test everything; hold fast to what is good (I Thessalonians 5:16-21).

The above verses come from a letter sent by Saint Paul to the new church in Thessalonike. Written in 50 A.D., it is the oldest extant piece of New Testament writing. In it the apostle gives the troubled congregation some good advice. As we reflect on Orthodox women and our Church, it will profit us to keep in mind the words of Saint Paul, especially to heed his warning not to "quench the Spirit." With glad hearts and minds open to the Holy Spirit, we are sure to receive life-giving grace.

Thus far, discussion of the critical issue of women and the Orthodox Church has been inadequate and superficial. Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh regrets the "many fearful spirits that are afraid of rethinking ideas that have been accepted without reflection." (qtd.in Behr-Sigel, p.xii). The discussion,

according to Father Thomas Hopko, is at a "primitive state." (p.x) Dr. Elisabeth Behr-Sigel correctly emphasizes the "necessity of a creative reflection." (p.4) The need for such discussion is obvious.

Beginning with the "timid and stammering" (Behr-Sigel 18) conference of Orthodox women held (1978) at Agapia in Roumania, there have since been several others. (Rhodes, 1988 and Crete, January, 1991). Having minimal resonance in the community, these conferences have not significantly advanced the discussion. From accounts in the press, it seems that generally the participants are the same persons, that they draw the same conclusions, make the same recommendations. The time has come to widen participation in the discussion and to advance the arguments of both sides in a more constructive manner.

These objectives could be furthered by the establishment of a broadly based commission, composed of hierarchs, priests, laywomen and men, to organize and oversee a long-range plan of investigation and discussion of all aspects of Orthodox women's roles and status in the ecclesial community. (Such commissions and programs already exist in a number of churches in this country, including the Roman Catholic.) Diocesan and local commissions, also broadly based, could have the responsibility for arranging lectures, study-groups and meetings. This could then afford all the people of the Church, clergy and laity alike, the opportunity to hear and discuss various points of view, to ask questions and express opinions.

The opportunity to speak and be heard is especially important for Orthodox women, who "for nearly 2,000 years had been invited to keep silent." (Behr-Sigel 10). It is time to let them speak of and for themselves, openly and freely. It is likewise time for the Church to listen to what its faithful women have to say. They deserve a respectful hearing. The Church ought not imitate the eleven male disciples and dismiss the words of women as female "foolishness" (Ieros) (Luke 24:11).

The agenda for a program of meaningful discussion should at least include the following issues.

Liturgical Language

All language communicates, carries messages. Words convey thoughts. (The Greek *logos* has multiple meanings, including "word" and "reason.") The language used in the liturgy about human beings carries to Orthodox women a painful message of subordination and non-existence. Some familiar examples will serve to illustrate.

Traditional phrases like the "God of our fathers" and the "faith of our fathers" suggest two things: either our mothers had no God and faith or they had another God and faith. Yet nothing could be further from the truth!

References are made to the "brotherhood in Christ." Is there not a sisterhood in Christ, the untold millions of pious Orthodox Christian women? Prayers are offered for our "fathers and forefathers." All Orthodox Christians have mothers and foremothers. Should we not also remember them in our prayers.

Likewise, Orthodoxy's many canonized "holy mothers" are routinely forgotten. The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom concludes with the words, "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us." And yet our numerous "holy mothers," the female saints, including the Theotokos, also hear our prayers and intercede for us in heaven. Surely, their *presbeia* (intercession)

is no less powerful than that of the "holy fathers."

Phrases like the "brethren of this holy Church" or the "sons of God" are frequently heard. They completely ignore the existence of at least half of the Body of Christ. The congregation includes women, sisters, wives, daughters, mothers of the "brothers." Even as women sit in the pews and worship God, such androcentric, exclusive language denies their very presence. Does not God have daughters as well as sons?

The Church must show greater sensitivity in the use of language. The remedy is not at all difficult. The addition of words like "women," "daughters," "sisters," "mothers" to traditional liturgical phrases could help reduce the unnecessary marginalization of Orthodox women through language.

In this connection, it is pertinent to note that Christ made such an addition, altering Judaism's liturgical language which referred to the Israelites as the "sons of Abraham." A poignant story, it is told in Luke 13:10-17.

When Christ healed the crippled woman who had been bent over for eighteen years, the "leader of the synagogue" accused Him of breaking the Sabbath. Christ then "shamed" His opponent, asserting the priority of the woman's welfare over man-made traditions of the Sabbath. He not only enabled her to stand up straight, by calling her "a daughter of Abraham," Christ was also the first to recognize the woman's personhood and human dignity. Previously, only males, the "sons of Abraham," were recognized as persons in the Jewish community of faith.

The Uncleanliness of Women

The Orthodox Church does not teach that women are "unclean" and "ritually impure" during menstrual periods and for forty days after giving birth. Nevertheless, it tolerates practices (based on Leviticus 12 and 15) which define females as "unclean" and "ritually impure during" these times. According to this tradition, females are prohibited from taking communion, from baking bread for the Church, and even from attending services when there is "an issue of blood."

In effect, this primitive tradition of the "blood taboo" excommunicates Orthodox Christian women, not because they are guilty of any, sin but because certain natural processes are taking place in their female bodies. This and similar traditions deeply offend women. Metropolitan Anthony has correctly called them "an insult to women." (Behr-Sigel 9).

Yet, this taboo is still officially maintained by the Church and defended by some churchmen. Not long ago, a prominent Orthodox theologian explained that "uncleanliness" describes the "biological condition" of a woman who has just given birth. He further stated that she needs forty days to "normalize" before she can return to normal social and Church life." This explanation raises the question, is the giving of a life "unclean" and "abnormal"? Furthermore, what is the sin or stain that requires a new mother to be "purified"?

Without violating any of its teachings and doctrines, the Orthodox Church should disclaim and discard all manifestations of this tradition which demeans women. The Church could thereby bring its praxis into harmony with that of our Lord.

The three synoptic gospels (Mark 5:21-43, Matthew 9:18-26, Luke 8:40-48) tell how Jesus ignored Jewish tradition when He healed the hemorrhaging woman who touched Him. Jesus did not shrink from her, in fear of pollution. He considered her neither defiled nor defiling. Instead, with infinite tact and love, Jesus restored the woman to health and to the community from which the "blood taboo" had socially and ritually isolated her for twelve years. Orthodox Christian women today ask why our Church holds to a tradition which Christ Himself abolished.

Access to the Altar

Orthodox females are from infancy denied access to the altar. There appears to be no theological justification for the denial. It is probably connected with the idea that females are agents of pollution because they menstruate. Thus is created another tenacious tradition which discriminates against Orthodox Christians who are born female.

The discrimination begins when forty-day old baby girls are churched. Unlike baby boys, they are not carried around the altar. (There are today only a few priests who take all infants around the altar.) At 40 days, baby girls are mercifully unaware of the discrimination. But they experience it soon enough, at the critical age of their physical and emotional development. We have altar boys, but no altar girls.

How do we explain to adolescent girls why only boys are allowed to serve God at the altar? Whatever the explanation, the message they get has to be that in some mysterious, unspoken way, girls are not as "good" as boys. Hurt feelings at this time in the life of an Orthodox girl can lead (and it often does) to permanent alienation from the Church.

In adulthood, Orthodox females, no matter how pious and faithful, are still denied access to the altar. The irony of their exclusion is not lost on them. The imposing figure of a woman, the Theotokos, dominates the sacred space from which all her sisters are barred. Only men are allowed to stand at the altar, close to Mary. Ecclesially invisible, women watch silently from a distance.

Resolution of this issue does not mean violation of Orthodox teachings. Sacred Tradition does not present obstacles. Given Orthodox belief that both males and females are created in the image and likeness of God, that both are called to become God, why is access to the altar available only to males?

The Diaconate of Women

The ecclesial visibility of Orthodox Christian women could be promoted by tonsuring women as readers and chanters. But more importantly, the diaconate of women should be re-instituted in our Church. From Agapia (1976) to Crete (1991), conferences on women and the Church have consistently recommended its renewal. However, despite these repeated recommendations and almost a decade of sporadic discussion, no action has been taken on this matter.

The Tradition of women's diaconate is well established and documented. It begins with Paul's co-worker Phoebe, "deacon of the church at Cenchreae" (Romans 18:1) in addition to her, Orthodoxy recognizes a number of women deacon saints. Among them are Susanna, ascetic and martyr; Nonna, the mother of Saint Gregory the Theologian; Olympias, deacon of Hagia Sophia, the trusted friend and associate of Saint John Chrysostom.

Until well into the twelfth century women were ordained deacons in the Orthodox Church. Almost a millennium later, in the twentieth century Metropolitan Nektarios (+1920, canonized 1961) ordained several women deacons in Greece.

The ancient ordination service is included in the Euchologion. (It is there, ready to be used once again.) Women were ordained after the Anaphora during the divine Liturgy. Recognized as part of the sacramental priesthood (hierosyne), they wore the orarion and took communion at the altar.

During the long history of the women's diaconate, their roles varied, liturgical, pastoral, catechetical, philanthropic, according to the needs of the Church. When the order is renewed, it "must not be simply an archaeological reconstruction". (Behr-Sigel 225). If it is to have meaning and to be a true diakonia after the model of Christ, the women's diaconate should be based on authentic Orthodox theology. And it should also be creatively structured to serve the needs of the contemporary world and Church.

Women and men must share equally in the dignity and responsibility of service to God and the people of God. The Holy Spirit does not discriminate according to biological categories. Nor should the Church so define its ministries.

The Priesthood

In any discussion of women and the Church, the question of women priests cannot be avoided. In ecumenical discourse it has displaced the filioque as the burning issue of our time. It cannot be ignored.

Given the fact that there is no biblical or historic precedent for women priests in the Orthodox Church, the issue is considerably more complex than that of the diaconate.

The idea of ordaining women priests has encountered resistance. Ultimately, however, this is the issue that will test Orthodoxy's allegiance to the ecclesial ideal proclaimed in the ancient baptismal formula. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ . . . there is no longer male and female" (Galatians 3:27-28).

Through the sacraments of baptism and chrismation Orthodox females receive the same heavenly illumination (ouranion ellampsin) and the same gift of sanctification (hagiasmou doron) as do males. Why then is an iron clad line drawn to bar all Orthodox women from the sacramental priesthood?

At present, this critical question is being answered in two ways. First, the exclusion of women from the priesthood is defended by appeals to the dominant tradition (the one which defines females as inferior, "weak and sinful") and to certain Biblical passages taken out of context. Second, the exclusion is justified by new theories, the "iconic image" and "complementarity," both of which lack Scriptural and patristic bases. Since these answers have proved theologically inadequate, intensive theological reflection and critical re-examination of all Church traditions are imperative.

We cannot here present the arguments on both sides of the issue. They are the subject for extensive and honest dialogue between clergy and laity, between women and men, between theologians and lay persons. All members of the "royal priesthood" have the privilege and responsibility to help form the mind of the Church. The process will take time and will not be easy. It will undoubtedly cause pain. But the Church can no longer postpone a serious response to this serious question.

Prejudices, fears and passions will have to be laid aside. In this connection, the advice of Saint Isidore of Pelusium to Saint Cyril of Alexandria still holds: "Prejudice does not see clearly" antipathy does not see at all. If you wish to be clear of both these affections of the eyesight, do not pass violent sentences, but commit causes to just judgment" (Migne 78:361C).

History now presents Orthodoxy with a "cause" to "commit to just judgment," the issue of women's place and participation in our Church. For fallible human beings to judge this cause justly will be difficult. But given the promise of divine grace, it can be done. The Holy Spirit will not fail us.

Christ Himself made us the promise: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (John 16:13).

Once the search begins, the truth shall be found.

With "faith, hope and love" (I Corinthians 13:13) these reflections are offered for your consideration and prayers.

Notes

1. This work of the noted French Orthodox theologian advances the discussion of our present subject.
2. For details see Eva C. Topping, *Holy Mothers of Orthodoxy: Women and the Church* (Minneapolis, 1987) *Saints and the Sisterhood: The Lives of 48 Holy Women* (Minneapolis, 1990).
3. See the names given in the useful work of Matushka Ellen Gvosdev, *The Female Diaconate: An Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis MN, 1991), pp. 11-19
4. Basil's view is analyzed by Maryanne Cline Horowitz, "The Image of God in Man-- Is Woman Include?" *Harvard Theological Review* 72 (1979), pp. 195-199.
5. A readily available commentary can be found in Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London, 1987), pp. 236-242.
6. See, for example, the 48 women saints whose lives and deeds are related in *Saints and Sisterhood*.
7. Elisabeth Behr-Sigel was the keynote speaker at this meeting.
8. For criticism of these views see Elisabeth Moberly's review of *Women and the Priesthood* edited by Thomas Hopko (New York, 1984), in *Sobornost* 6 (1984), pp. 86-89; *Holy Mothers*, pp. 124-125; Behr-Sigel, pp. 175-179.

Mission and Outreach

The Reverend Father Steven J. Vlahos
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Summary

Mission

We live in a time of the decline of the Christian consciousness in our country, the world, and within the walls of our own Churches. We have a great task to renew that consciousness. What is our Mission? Go baptize and teach! Clergy, laity, and hierarchy are called upon to spread the good news.

How are we to fulfill our mission?

We must know what it is to be an Orthodox Christian. We have to prepare ourselves to be able to have others experience Christ. This can be accomplished by:

- Restoring the order of the Catechumens
- Developing a nationwide program of catechism/evangelism
- Developing a nationwide program of continuing education
- Speaking in "truth and love"
- Using contemporary American English as the norm in Church life, and
- Emphasizing philanthropy

Outreach

It is not enough to bring souls into the church through our mission, we must nurture and care for them by constantly reaching out to all of the members of the Body. Outreach seeks to draw Christians into the fourfold life of the church:

- Apostles Doctrine - Education
- Fellowship - Community Involvement
- Breaking of the Bread - Divine Liturgy
- Prayer - Spiritual Life

The ten outreach concerns:

- The Unchurched
- Converts
- Immigrants
- Youth
- Senior Citizens
- Modern Day "Captives" (homebound, prison, nursing home)
- Marriage and Divorce

- Those Married Outside the Church
- Orthodox and Heterodox Spouses
- Orthodox and non-Christian Spouses
- Children of These Marriages
- Homosexuals and the Church
- Women and the Church
- Liturgical Roles for Women
- Purity Issues
- Ordination

**This list is not inclusive. It is a beginning. The world and our faithful await the Orthodox Christian mission and outreach for the Glory of God.

It is in the hope that we will all be inspired to walk in that newness of life, that we present these thoughts and recommendations on Mission and Outreach for our Church and our world today.

MISSION

Make Disciples Of All Nations

We know the commandment of Christ, to GO, BAPTIZE, and TEACH; how are we to fulfill it?

There must be a new commitment by our whole Church, Hierarchs, Priests and the Laity, to the evangelizing of our own country, as well as missionary projects overseas.

It is not only the clergy who must preach the Gospel.

Our Church has been sorely lacking in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, as if we were going to offend other Christian communities by our preaching. Evangelism is not proselytizing, emotional pressure, or threats of eternal damnation. It is the invitation to a life in the Body of Christ, incorporation in the Church that Jesus Christ founded, and against which the gates of hell will not prevail.

But we should make no mistake. There are individual and corporate implications for this new life in Christ. If we are serious about preaching the Good News and calling people into the fellowship of the Orthodox Church, we must consider what kind of life we are offering. The life of a Christian Disciple begins with self-denial. The Lord's call is a call to sacrifice and self-denial.

If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it (St. Luke 9:23, 24)

In an age when society at large expects Christians to indiscriminately authenticate nearly every lifestyle, the ascetic message may be difficult (if not delicate) to communicate. But Orthodoxy is called to transform the world, not be conformed to it.

Our daily cross is the cross of self-crucifixion, the cross of self-sacrifice. Through it, we are able to extend beyond ourselves and live for others.

We must remember that the "Sin of the Progenitor," (usually referred to as "original sin") was self-love. The Cross of Christ has taught us "a more excellent way," as St. Paul has admirably described in I Corinthians, chapter 13. The call to be a Christian is a call to this kind of love.

This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (St. John 15:12, 13).

It is only when we have denied ourselves, and taken up our cross, that we can truly be followers of Christ.

The invitation of the Gospel is an invitation to discover our true self, a painful and often difficult process. There are many who would gladly accept the Gospel, if it would not interfere with their personal agendas, which often have no point of reference in the faith and teaching of the Church.

In calling others to Christ, we owe it to them to be honest about the Christian vocation. To become new, to become what and who God has created us to be is not an easy task. Even the Lord admonished us to "count the cost" (see St. Luke 14:27,28).

The fact is, we live in a time of the decline of the Christian consciousness in our country, the world, and within the walls of our own churches. We have a great task to renew that consciousness. Our responsibility is great. Our opportunity is even greater.

We have many places to GO; many people to BAPTIZE; many more to TEACH. We have the challenge of inviting the human family to become the "NEA KTISIS" - the New Creation. The invitation is Christ's own.

Wisdom has built Her House, She has hewn out Her seven pillars; She has killed her beasts; She has mingled Her Wine; She has also furnished Her Table. She has sent forth Her maidens; She cries out upon the highest places of the city, 'Whoever is simple, let him turn in here;' to the one that lacks understanding, She says, 'Come, eat of My Bread, and drink of the Wine Which I have mingled' (Proverbs 9:1-5).

Recommendations

RESTORATION OF THE ORDER OF THE CATECHUMENATE

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

As people respond to our preaching, we need to prepare them for their New Life in the Christ. In the case of families who are Orthodox already, we need to spend time preparing the sponsors and parents of infants who are to be baptized. The restoration of the Order of the Catechumens will meet these needs.

We all require an introduction to Christ, someone to lead us to Him. As it is written of St. Andrew the First-called, "first he found his own brother . . . and brought him to Jesus" (St. John 1:41,42).

As a Catechumen, adult converts have a role and responsibility in the Community. Sponsors and parents have an opportunity to reacquaint and recommit themselves to their Faith.

The Service of Chrismation, as part of Christian Baptism, must be given its rightful context and meaning. As we prepare converts from heterodox Christian communities, we must affirm that our Church accepts only a complete Orthodox Baptism, and that if Chrismation alone is used, this is only by *oikonomia*.

In all things, our goal is to receive souls into the Faith, and that they may have an appreciation and initial understanding of the great commitment and joy of the Christian calling. Let our response be that of the Deacon and Apostle Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch (see Acts 8:26-39).

This is a great challenge for the Church today. As the Lord said:

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray, therefore, to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest (St. Matthew 9:37, 38).

Support Parish Catechists

How, then, shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him in Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent (Romans 10:14,15)?

The Apostles once complained that they did not have enough time to commit to the "word of God" (Acts 6:2). Many of our Hierarchs and Priests are in the same circumstance today, and yet, this is their principle function in the Church.

It is time for our Clergy to commit a greater part of their ministry to Catechesis/Evangelism and to form a corps of lay co-workers to assist them in spreading the Gospel and teaching the Faith. This is nothing more than the restoration of the order of Catechists who, in the first centuries of our Church, prepared individuals for Baptism.

Parishes should support these Catechists, full-time or part-time ministers of the Gospel and see this as part of the integral life of the Parish.

The UNIFORM PARISH REGULATIONS, which govern our Communities, speak to this issue: "The diakonia (work and ministry) of the Parish consists of proclaiming the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith. . . ." (Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 2).

The Priest has the responsibility of "proclaiming the Kerygma of the Apostles and Dogma of the Fathers, preaching the Word, teaching the commandments of the New Life, . . ." etc. (Chapter 4, Section 1). And not only on Sunday morning!

Preach the word; be diligent in season, out of season, exhort with all patience and teaching (II Timothy

4:2)

We need LITURGICAL PREACHING, at every Mysterion and Service of our Church. Call it MISSION, or call it OUTREACH - the fact is that we must evangelize our own people, many of them for the first time.

Our Faithful must first hear the Gospel themselves; then they will "cooperate in every way towards the welfare and prosperity of the Parish and the success of its sacred mission" (Article 6, Section 6).

There are tremendous resources in our community-at-large, mass media, radio, television, as well as the printed word. We must harness these resources for the spreading of our own faith and fit these methods to our own message. That message can only be defined by the Faith of the Apostles, the Faith of the Fathers, the Faith of the Martyrs, the Faith that sustains the Universe.

A catechism/evangelism program in the local parish can spark new and invigorated enthusiasm. Our people are hungry. They are thirsty. Let us set aright our goals.

Labor not for the food which perishes, but for that food which endures to life everlasting (St. John 6:27).

Continuing Catechetical Education

And daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42).

What a description of the first clergymen of our Church! So it should be today. At Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, we have more than a center for the academic and theological training of our priests. It must become the source for a nationwide school of faith. We cannot afford to leave the preaching, catechizing, educating and living of Christ's Gospel to the self-appointed and self-ordained.

Within the present structure of the Archdiocese, with Cathedrals and major parishes in every state, the means to establishing such a "school without walls" is already in place. Consider the impression this ministry would have on the Faithful.

A national program would not only facilitate the training of Parish Catechists, it would also help prepare seminarians to become Preachers, as well as provide ongoing education for Priests. It would encourage our clergy, Bishops and Priests alike, to hone their skills at preaching; both in substance as well as style. Our message is too important. Without vision and conviction our people will perish.

The lion has roared; who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophecy (Amos 3:8)?

SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE

And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd (St. John 10:16).

It is time for our Church to incorporate Evangelizing as part of Her ecumenical dialogue with heterodox Christians. His All-Holiness, Patriarch Joachim III of Constantinople expressed, as early as 1902, the following viewpoint to his fellow Orthodox Patriarchs, "on the subject of our present and future relations with the two great growths of Christianity, viz. the Western Church and the Church of the Protestants:"

Of course, the union of them and of all who believe in Christ with us in the Orthodox Faith is the pious and heartfelt desire of our Church and of all genuine Christians, who stand firm in the evangelical doctrine of unity, and it is the subject of constant prayer and supplication It is a truism that the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is founded upon the Apostles and preserved by the divine and inspired Fathers in the Oecumenical Councils, and that Her Head is Christ, the Great Shepherd, Who bought Her with His own Blood, and that according to the inspired and heaven-bound Apostle [Paul] She is the pillar and ground of truth and the Body of Christ: this Holy Church is indeed, one in identity of faith with the decisions of the Seven Oecumenical Councils, and She must be one and not many, differing from each other in dogmas and fundamental institutions of ecclesiastical government. (Letter in The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement).

We need to return to the spirit of these early ecumenical pioneers, who saw their responsibility to their fellow Christians as a responsibility of love and truthfulness.

We have a prophetic role to fulfill, as a watchman to the house of Israel (see Ezekiel 33:7-9). This requires purity of heart and sincerity of intention.

How will you say to your brother, "Let me pull the speck out of your eye;" and, look, there is a log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first cast the log out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to pull the speck out of your brother's (St. Matthew 7:4,5).

Speak and Listen with Understanding

We hear them speak in our own language of the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11).

The miracle of the Day of Pentecost was not that the Apostles spoke in marvelous languages; it was that the Good News they preached was understood by everyone who heard them.

For too long, our Church has fought and argued about which language to use. The historical languages of the Liturgy, Greek, Slavonic, Arabic and others, have a place in the Church today, but not at the expense of the understanding and nurturing of the Faithful, much less of the Catechumens.

Contemporary American English is the language of the Orthodox peoples of America. It should be the language of their Services as well.

Where there is need, by all means, let there be divergence. We seek unity, not uniformity. What is appropriate for one situation may not be for another. But at all times, the moving force behind our decisions should be the edification of the Church. As St. Paul has written:

There are, it seems, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be like a barbarian speaking. . . . But you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in gifts that edify the Church (I Corinthians 14:10-12).

PHILANTHROPY – AGAIN!

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in Heaven (St. Matthew 5:16).

Our Lord said that a sign of the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven would be that the poor would have the Gospel preached to them (St. Matthew 11:5). He also said that we would always have the poor. Why? Not because He isn't merciful, but because He wants us to participate in His mercy.

We hear many today say that the Church has not proven to be a good steward of these gifts of God; that money is wasted on excess and vainglory.

And so we have the poor with us, so that we may learn again to be merciful, as God is merciful with us.

Who are these poor? Just look around. The homeless, the hungry, the illiterate, people with AIDS, the helpless, the hopeless, the prisoners, the sick. They wait for us in every generation to bring the Gospel to them, not with high-sounding words, but with humble and patient acts of compassion and love. This is the Everlasting Gospel, "that God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son."

We have the potential for great social and human improvement right in our own backyard. Each Parish can take on projects in their own community, as a witness to their love for Christ. It is a message delivered in silence that speaks louder than any words.

My little children, let us love not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth (I John 3:18).

These are our recommendations. Not just words that may or may not sound good to the hearer, but what we feel our Church is called to today.

- A Restoration of the Order of the Catechumens
- A Nationwide Program of Catechism/Evangelism
- A Nationwide Education Program for Catechists
- A New Ecumenical Approach of "Truth in Love"
- Contemporary American English as the Norm in Church Life
- A New Emphasis on Philanthropy

It's time. It is later than we think.

Do you not say, There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are already white, way past the time of harvest. And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal: that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together (St. John 4:35,36).

OUTREACH

And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine, and in Fellowship, and in The Breaking of The Bread, and in Prayer (Acts 2:43).

What do we mean by Outreach? It is the continual incorporation of the Body of Christ, the creative and multiform diakonia which makes the new life in Christ available to every Orthodox Christian, in accordance with their measure of faith.

Becoming New Creations in Christ is a process, which requires our cooperation, with God and with each other. It is the nurturing process of maturation which St. Paul speaks of in the Epistle to the Ephesians:

[F]or the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ: until we all grow, in the unity of the Faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God, into a complete person, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians. 4:12,13).

This is the DOGMATIC aspect of the Church, the continuous teaching of the Gospel of Christ in word and deed.

The Fourfold Nature of Outreach

As Christ reached out on His Holy Cross to the four corners of the world, so does our OUTREACH seek to draw all Christians into the fourfold life of the Church.

- The Apostles' Doctrine
- Fellowship
- The Breaking of The Bread (Divine Liturgy)
- Prayer

It is not enough to bring souls into the Church through our Mission, we must nurture and care for them by constantly reaching out to all of the members of the Body. St. Paul makes this clear in his teaching:

God has set each member in the Body as it has pleased Him. If everyone were the same, what would the Body be? Now there are many members, but one Body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you;" neither can the head say to the feet, "I don't need you." . . . God has fit the Body together, giving a greater abundance of honor to those members that seem lacking, in order that there should be no divisions in the Body; and that the members should all care for one another. If someone is suffering, the other members should empathize, and if someone is honored, let all the others rejoice (I Corinthians 12:18-21, 24-26).

Our task is to examine how we may relate every member of the Body to the whole, bringing them into the fullness of the Church, with real participation and inclusion. Based on the Apostolic model, we can see the four essential areas are:

- Education (Apostles' Doctrine)

- Community Involvement (Fellowship)
- Liturgical Participation (The Breaking of the Bread)
- Spiritual Life (Prayer)

What follows is a list of ten concerns. It is by no means exhaustive and we hope that others may follow as a result of this paper. (A special insert on human sexuality, "Male And Female Created He Them," will preface the last four).

- The Unchurched
- Converts
- Immigrants
- Youth
- Senior Citizens
- Modern Day "Captives" (homebound, prison, nursing home)
- Marriage and Divorce
- Those Married Outside the Church
- Orthodox and Heterodox spouses
- Orthodox and non-Christian spouses
- Children of these marriages
- Homosexuals and the Church
- Women and the Church
- Liturgical roles for women (chanter, reader, choir)
- Purity issues (presence and/or service in the Altar)
- Ordination

Our recommendations will be based on the Apostolic model for Church life. Some will call for renewal according to the mind of Christ, others for the restoration of ancient practice; but in either case, the dominant principle will be that of Christ:

Every scribe, who is learned in the Kingdom of Heaven, is like a man who is a householder, who brings forth both new and old things out of his treasure (St. Matthew 13:52).

The Unchurched

Even so, it is not the will of your Father, Who is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish (St. Matthew 18:14).

So concludes the parable of the ninety-nine sheep and the one who went astray. Today, it would be fair to say that the ratio has increased in favor of the latter. There are literally tens of thousands of Unchurched Orthodox, with as many reasons why they no longer practice their faith.

Recommendations

1. In every local parish, let there be a campaign to seek out and search for those who have dropped out or have not been seen for a long period of time. Follow up with a reintroduction to the Faith

and a welcome back.

2. Fellowship events, which often attract rarely seen members (Sacraments, memorials, festivals, etc.), should be occasions of encouragement and warm welcome. Special committees must be formed to follow up on attraction and instruction of Unchurched members.
3. At Great Feast Days (e.g. Palm Sunday, Holy Friday) clergy should make it a point not to preach sermons castigating those who have "shown up." Rather, let us give them something to come back to!
4. Let there be prayer in the Church at every Liturgy, public and pronounced, for those who are absent.
5. Although we cannot force anyone to live their Faith, we can lift up Christ in our own lives. Do our brothers and sisters see the love of the Christ in us? If we are bearing our cross, they will. It is love that draws us to God.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to Myself (St. John 12:32).

Converts

I will bring them to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples (Isaiah 56:7).

The first great issue of the Orthodox Church was whether the Faith was meant for Greeks (Gentiles), as well as Jews. Even some of the Apostles were not certain at first! The tables have certainly turned since then, but have we changed?

From clergy who discourage mass conversions to parishioners who tell seekers that their ancestry is wrong, we still struggle as a Church with being Catholic (katholous) - for all people. We still make it difficult for others to join our Church. If we are serious about preaching the Gospel, we should be ready for people to respond to it.

Recommendations

1 Catechism is essential. It is an understanding of our Faith that we seek to impart. There must be classes, lectures and homilies. Too often, converts are received without proper instruction, preparation and understanding.

1. As often as possible, the reception of converts should be at well attended Services, with some community event following.
2. To put to rest a misconception - not all converts prefer the Divine Liturgy in English, but most are in the same boat as the rest of our members; they do not understand any of the historical languages of the Liturgy. English or the vernacular, is the only path to a worshipping Church that fulfills the Apostolic model, to pray and sing with understanding (see I Corinthians 14:15).
3. Far from the popular notion, the monastic tradition is a LAY tradition and the source of much spiritual food. Converts and "Cradle" Orthodox alike should work for their establishment and increase, to bring emphasis again to the wealth of our spiritual tradition.

Whether we were born into an Orthodox family, or we have created our own through a conscious decision, the fact is, we all must make a beginning in our faith; we are all converts to Christ.

Our Church calls all mankind to the knowledge of the love of God. We must learn to embrace all those who embrace the Faith, regardless of their ethnic origin, color, or cultural tradition. The Lord Himself observed that it is not only those born with the privilege of faith, but those that choose, who shall find a place in His Kingdom.

And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God (St. Luke 13:29).

Immigrants

The stranger who dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself (Leviticus 19:34).

Immigrants, simple men and women, brought the Orthodox Faith to the Americas. It would be a great shame if our Church were to forget those origins. How especially grateful should converts be to this memory, and how supportive should all of us be to those who are still arriving in this land of opportunity. What are we offering these fellow Orthodox when they arrive on our shores?

Recommendations

1. Where appropriate, let us have English Schools, as well as Greek (or whatever) Schools to perpetuate native tongues. Let there also be religious instruction in Greek, Russian, Arabic and any other language that is spoken by the Faithful.
2. The ethnic language schools have often become isolated fellowships within the larger community. Many Parishes have enough diversity to warrant "cultural exchange" programs within their own walls. More homogeneous Parishes may want to have exchanges with nearby communities of different ethnic origins.
3. In affirming that contemporary American English should be the liturgical standard of our Church, let us not forget the needs of the newly arrived, as well as the beauty and integrity of the historical liturgical tongues. A selection of hymns, such as the Trisagion and the Cherubikon, sung in these historical languages, can give the feeling of "home" to many immigrants, without compromising the comprehension of the Liturgy.
4. Those who come from native Orthodox countries often bring many local/traditional customs. These should be encouraged and not ignored.

Differences of culture, language, race and ethnic origin are not obliterated by Christ; they are sanctified. Hospitality to strangers is a good beginning towards this holiness.

Let brotherly love continue. Do not forget to be hospitable to strangers, for in this way, some have entertained Angels unawares (Hebrews 13:1,2).

Youth

Permit the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the Kingdom of God (St. Mark 10:14).

Again and again, we hear the cry in our Parishes, "What are we doing for our youth?" If statistics tell us anything, they tell us our programs are not doing enough. We are raising generations of young Orthodox, who neither know, nor care to know their Faith. Is it that they are not drawn to Christ, or has something been blocking their path?

Sunday School, has it worked? How many of our children know who the Saints are on their Parish Iconostasion? Religious instruction begins in the home; there is no getting around it.

Recommendations

1. The Sunday Catechetical School must be conducted either before or after the Divine Liturgy, thereby enabling the youth to participate in the worship of the Church. The educational program of the local Parish must have a unified effort towards educating and involving the parents. Everything we do and say in Sunday School is only an affirmation of what occurs in the home.
2. Dedicated Youth Ministries with emphasis on Christian faith and action are a must for each Parish, meaning both dedication of time and money. In addition, our youth must be integrated with the rest of the Parish; an evening of GOYA with the Golden Age Club, for example.
3. Nowhere is the need for English so pronounced as in our Youth. And not only on this level of understanding; there needs to be a concentrated effort to explain the meaning of the Liturgy in its many facets.

Spiritual retreats, local pilgrimages (to a monastery or wonder-working icon) and special programs must be organized to meet their spiritual needs.

Our children are full members of the Body of Christ. They may not pay on a pledge, fill the coffers of the building funds, or make donations to adorn the sanctuary. Rather, it is they who adorn the Church, in the beauty of their simplicity and trust. In these, we would do well to follow their example.

Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (St. Matthew 18:3).

Senior Citizens

You shall stand up in the presence of the elderly, and honor them, and reverence your God (Leviticus 19:32).

In a day when men and women are living longer and comprise the largest segment of active Church members, the needs of our elderly community need to be addressed. These people, who have devoted an entire lifetime of faith and service in the Church, are too often forgotten in their waning years.

Recommendations

1. As much as our Senior Citizens participate in the ongoing educational programs of the Church, they also have much to offer. Their memory of the recent history of the Church is invaluable. Oral history sessions should be encouraged, lest their wisdom be wasted on our own ignorance.
2. Many Parishes have succeeded at providing fellowship opportunities for the elderly, but we must be careful not to isolate the elderly from the rest of the Community.
3. Although many of our Senior Citizens enjoy the Services in the traditional tongues, they also enjoy having their grandchildren in Church! They, more than any other group, seem willing to make language sacrifices in favor of understanding and keeping their descendants Orthodox.
4. A long life is considered a blessing from God, but it also means a long history of spiritual struggle. Our Church must honor this struggle, especially as many prepare to face the end of this life. We must establish special ministries to serve them, particularly when one has been bereaved by the death of a spouse or a child. Many of the auxiliary groups (e.g. Philoptochos) can serve to this end.

The Youth and our Senior Citizens have many of the same needs. The way we treat the latter, may have a great deal to do with whether we shall retain the former.

Honor your father and mother; (which is the first commandment with a promise) that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth (Ephesians 6:2,3).

Modern Day "Captives"

Whoever has this world's material benefits, and sees his brother in need, and shuts off his own compassion from him, how does the love of God dwell in him (St. John 3:17)?

Christ came to set the "captives" free, and we must continue that ministry in our own Communities. There are many modern day "captives," those in hospitals, nursing centers, institutions, prison, and those living at great distances from a parish. It is most certainly not only the clergy who have the responsibility of this ministry.

There are many opportunities for the laity to serve, not only those in their own Parish, but in the community at large. This is the witness to our love, the proof of our preaching.

Recommendations

1. We cannot meet the needs if we do not know what they are. Social Service committees should be formed to heighten the awareness of the Parish and assist the clergy. Monthly updates, seminars, and Parish programs should be organized to expand the involvement of as many people as possible.
2. Visitation is essential. For those who cannot participate in the local fellowship of the Church, it

must be brought to them.

3. Our Church needs a complete restoration of the Diaconate to serve the crying need for liturgical participation with those unable, for whatever reason, to attend. These Deacons could be prepared through study courses which would be (1) sanctioned by the Hierarchs, (2) formulated by the faculty of the Theological School and (3) administered by the local parish priest. These Deacons would serve at the Sunday Liturgy; particularly invaluable would be their assistance in the administration of Communion and other liturgical and pastoral functions. They would continue to function "in the world," but must be understood to be full clergymen. The Diaconate is not a step to the Priesthood; rather it is part of it, with a full ministry of its own.
4. Those who work with the special needs of this often forgotten segment of our Communities need to have special sensitivities to their needs. There should be training and spiritual instruction in this regard.

If we are truly the Body of Christ, then we cannot afford to cut off our own limbs. How we respond to those of greatest need, yet least prominence, will one day come back to us all. Will we hear our Lord say this on the Day of Judgment?

I was hungry, and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me (St. Matthew 25:35,36).

"Male And Female Created He Them"

Before we move on to the recommendations on marriage and divorce, homosexuals, and the role of women, let us pause and reflect on the meaning and purpose of sexuality.

In the Book of Genesis we read:

So God created man in His own Image, in the Image of God He created him; male and female created He them (Genesis 1:27).

We may understand this passage in two ways. One, that men and women share in the same image of God, and, that our human nature is compound, both male and female. We were created by God to bear within ourselves the totality of sexuality. This does not imply a physical or biological notion of gender; rather that the fullness of sexuality was part of the original state of humankind, before the "Fall" (it should be noted that both the word and concept "Fall" are a convention of speech - they do not appear in Holy Scripture).

If we examine the nature of this "Fall," we see that the "Sin of the Progenitor," (the "original sin") was not mere disobedience, much less the desire for the physical sexual act (as many have wrongly interpreted the eating of the forbidden fruit).

In disobeying the command of God, our spiritual ancestors failed to choose for love, love for God, love for one another. God gave them, and has given us, the ultimate freedom, the freedom to choose (Genesis 2:16,17).

Adam and Eve, who were created to be together (Genesis 2:18-25), are reported as being apart when the temptation to disobey came (Genesis 3:1-6). This was the beginning of the opposition and fragmentation in the human spirit that has plagued the world ever since (Genesis 3:16). This was the beginning of the dissolution of love. Its first offspring was murder (Genesis 4:1-8).

The consequences of this choice for self-love have been devastating to the human family. The Creator was abandoned by His creation. Communion with Heaven was lost. Paradise was removed from earth. Our human nature, created to be immortal, became subject to death and divided against itself. Our sexuality, created to be a power and force of unifying love, became misdirected and misunderstood.

Then came Christ, born of the Virgin, to heal and restore our nature. The significance of Christ's sexuality cannot be underestimated.

In the story of Genesis, we read that from the virgin body of a man (Adam) came forth woman, who was called Eve, or Zoe, because, by giving birth (by blood and water in the natural sense), she would become the source of the human race.

In the "Book of Genesis of Jesus Christ" (St. Matthew 1:1 - literal translation), we read that from the virgin body of a woman, the new Eve - the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, comes forth the New Adam, Who, through the Holy Blood (Eucharist) and the Holy Water (Baptism) that flowed from His Side (St. John 19:34,35), has become the source of the New Creation, the new human race.

Consider the similarity of both creations. Adam was put to sleep, then his side was opened to bring forth Eve. Christ was put to sleep on the Cross, then His Side was opened, to bring forth the New Creation. As if to memorialize the creation of humanity, women, to this very day, give first nourishment to children at their own breast. And where else does the Christian seek spiritual nourishment, if not at the Breast of Christ, from which flow His Most Precious Blood and the cleansing waters of Regeneration?

The process of dissolution and disintegration of our human nature and the division of our sexuality is corrected by the New Adam and the New Eve. They have turned the process upside down, reversing the sexual roles, in order to bring them together again. Instead of a perfect woman from a perfect man, we have a perfect man from a perfect woman. Nowhere is the consequence of this reunification so poignantly depicted, as in the Icon of the Resurrection, which shows our Lord bringing Adam and Eve up together from out of the depths of hell.

And what of this new sexuality, this new human nature? Although Our Lord lived as a virgin, we surely cannot consider Him to have been asexual. Rather, He embodied the totality of male and female and redeemed their purpose. By His Incarnation, He has re-created our sexuality. By giving up His life for the world on the Precious Cross, He has restored its purpose. And in virtue of His Holy Resurrection, He has granted us His Holy Spirit, to empower us to partake of our sexuality as New Creations in Him.

Our nature, our sexuality is restored through sacrificial love. It finds its true purpose and fulfillment only in this love.

We know the commandment. It is the same yesterday, today and forever.

As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you: continue in My love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in My love . . . This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (St. John 15:10,12).

The Martyrs have showed their love in every age, giving their very life, not for fanatical convictions, but out of deep love for a person, the Divine Person, God Himself. Their love is a passionate love which testifies to their redeemed sexuality. What is the sign of a Martyr? It is not without significance that the First Martyr of our Church was St. Stephen the Archdeacon, whose name means "crown."

But we also call Marriage a crowning, a "stepsis." Is it not because those who are married are also called to that same sacrificial love which inspires the Martyrs? It is also a union with God, and our sexuality find physical expression in this context, as both a means of forging and expressing our new nature.

In the Mystery of Marriage, we return to the Garden of Eden, where they were exposed and vulnerable to each other, and not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). In this context, a physical sexual life becomes a willful commitment to another person, in whom one's nature finds fulfillment. This is the true meaning of the Epistle read at all Orthodox Marriages (Ephesians 6: 20-33).

The imagery of St. Paul, "being subject" and "above" and below" has nothing to do with the subjugation of women. He is speaking of the relationship of the heart and the head in the human body. Whereas a man brings the aspect of his sexuality as logos (reason - the head) to the conjugal relationship, a woman brings sophia (wisdom - the heart).

When a man and woman are joined in Marriage, they become "one flesh." They are one nature (male and female) and yet, two distinct persons. In this way, they glorify Christ, who, as both the Logos/Word and Sophia/Wisdom of God, was two natures (human and divine), yet One Divine Person. Sexual relations are a means of expressing this deep mystery, but they by no means comprehend its totality.

It should be pointed out that physical relations, like children, are not necessary to an Orthodox marriage. Both can be the cause of great joy and personal enrichment, but the foundational love of marriage goes deeper than either (note that the Orthodox Church is the only Christian community which considers the couple married at the altar, without the need for physical consummation - this is why there is no annulment in our Church).

Obviously, everyone cannot be married, much less, Martyrs. This is why God has given us a third way, the way of virginity, the way of celibacy - and it is no less sexual than the prior two.

We tend, in our modern world, to think of celibate persons as being strange and asexual. Rather, they are called to give full expression to their sexuality by a virginal love for all people. Monastic life is a perfect example.

In contrast to marriage, where we choose our partners, the monk does not choose the brethren of his, or her, community. But they are still called to love them, all of them, as intensely as God loves us. This is the fullness of sexuality without physical action. And it is more common than we think.

Consider our children or parents. We do not choose them (except in the case of adoption, which is considered a divine and grace-filled state, because it imitates God's choosing of us), but do we love them less strongly for that? We all know that physical sexual expressions are against nature in these relationships, but the love is passionate. Like the celibate, whether monk or in the world, these relationships call for self-denial and self-sacrifice.

It is only through this sacrifice that we find our true selves, united in the complete image of God, male and female. The Lord said: "Whoever would save his life must lose it." Part of carrying a cross is the willingness to hang on it, not as punishment, but in redemptive and sacrificial love for others.

Orthodoxy is not a religion; it is a way of living, a way of loving. Whether we are called to Martyrdom, or the intimacy of marriage, or a life of celibacy, we are all called to give up ourselves, and find our true selves in the Other, the other man, the other woman, the other person, the Image of God Himself.

Marriage and Divorce

Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven (St. Matthew 18:18).

Marriage has been given, like other Sacraments of the Church, as a provision for this world. Our Lord Himself called it an indissoluble bond (see St. Mark 10:2-12). This is the Christian ideal and any variance from it is by oikonomia, dispensation, out of love and compassion.

Although we conform to the civil laws of our land, we must recognize that it is the Church which has the authority from God to bind couples together through Marriage, as well as loose them from each other, through divorce.

The increasing divorce rate in our Church should give us pause as to whether we are preparing the Faithful for the challenge of Marriage, and ministering to them through the pain of divorce.

Recommendations - Marriage

1. Let there be pan-Orthodox cooperation in developing ministries that can prepare our people for marriage. Many do not understand the purposes of Christian Marriage, and why we try to marry within our Faith, at least someone who is Christian. If it happens to be the case, the non-Orthodox or non-Christian bride or groom-to-be should be invited to become an Orthodox Christian.
2. We need to provide the means of fellowship for couples preparing for marriage, as well as the newly married.
3. If not the entire Liturgy, let us at least restore Holy Communion for two Orthodox partners at a Marriage. Where there is one non-Orthodox partner, let the Common Cup remain. There are other liturgical practices that can be employed as well: the tradition of the Bride and Groom walking down the aisle together, traditional Orthodox Hymns, and the Betrothal taking place in the narthex. These lend a certain degree of variety to the service, and can involve the couple in a more active way in the planning of the ceremony.

4. Let us enhance the spiritual appreciation of Marriage, with the teaching of the unity of human nature that is so much a part of Orthodox Theology.

Recommendations - Divorce

1. The process of Ecclesiastical Divorce needs to be opened up to the understanding of the Faithful. Our Spiritual Courts often resemble either the inquisition or paper formalities. The Church should seem more interested in the souls of the Faithful, rather than the fees for the proceedings. There is also a difference of approach between jurisdictions in this country. Conferences to deal with these issues should be encouraged. The clergy and especially the Bishops should lead this effort.
2. In the local community, groups should be available for persons going through separation and divorce.
3. Very often, people do not receive their Ecclesiastical Divorces until they need to, for the sake of a new marriage or a desire to participate in one of the Mysteries of the Church as a sponsor. Receiving Holy Communion is not even discussed with the individual. We need to make our people aware of the spiritual implications of divorce, the necessity of Ecclesiastical Divorce, and not excommunicate 'en masse' those who may have not yet obtained it. Each circumstance will be different and needs to be treated as such; not that we should disregard the standards of the Church, but that we should apply oikonomia liberally, when it is for the salvation of a soul.
4. The spiritual needs of people going through divorce are delicate. We need to train the clergy of our Church in the demands of this particularly painful situation.

Our Lord said that divorce was given because of our "hardness of heart." But He has also promised that He would give us a "heart of flesh" for our "heart of stone." If we can deal with the pain and challenge of divorce in our Church today, then perhaps we will have a better chance of living in marriage as the Apostle calls us:

For the man is not without the woman, neither is the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, so also is the man by the woman; and all things are of God (I Corinthians 11:11,12).

Those Married Outside The Church

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by her husband. If this were not so, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy (I Corinthians 7:14).

There are two different problems here, but many similar solutions. Those who are married outside the Church to Heterodox Christians need only to have their marriages blessed in the Church in order to reincorporate themselves in the sacramental life of the Church.

Those married to non-Christians cannot do this, for the Church does not (and should not) marry

Christians and non-Christians (II Corinthians 6:14). But it does happen that decisions about whom to marry are made at one stage of life and faith, while the recognition of and need for the truth of the Gospel may happen at another.

Recommendations

1. There should be an active effort to inform and instruct the Orthodox and Heterodox couples as to why the Orthodox blessing is so important (as well as the invitation to become Orthodox). This should be seen as a complement to whatever marital relationship exists, even if there were only a civil ceremony. It is time to recognize the social validity of these marriages. This goes as well for Orthodox married to non-Christians. We should encourage participation in the full sacramental life of the Church as an enhancement to the existing marriage, not as a denouncement of "living in sin."
2. If it is possible, let the children be baptized and raised in the Church. Here we should stress the role of sponsor and the Orthodox parent as being responsible for raising the child in the Faith.
3. The witness of friendship and fellowship can be instrumental in bringing both parties into the Faith. Let there also be a mutual appreciation of the heterodox partner's devotion to their own Christian community, and a warm welcome for the non-Christian. Children must always be welcome at fellowship events, even if they have not been baptized.
4. If it is not possible for an Orthodox blessing to occur (either due to family pressure or the refusal of a spouse of a heterodox, or because of marriage to a non-Christian) let us admit to Communion those who have sought an entry to the Sacrament through Confession. It is senseless to deprive our own people of the Eucharist for an indefinite period of time. There is no sin that excommunicates a person from the Church forever, except that it not be repented.

If we cannot bless the Marriage, then we must pray with the couple for mutual understanding and growth. We must remember that the children of such families are special, even if they are not baptized.

This is a difficult and delicate issue, but we must always be guided by the same principles that guided the Apostles.

For how do you know, O woman, whether you shall save your husband? Or how do you know, O man, whether you shall save your wife (I Corinthians 7:16).

Homosexuals And The Church

Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ (I Corinthians 11:1).

One of the most controversial issues in modern religious life is the status of an emerging homosexual community. Although many may think so, this is not a new situation in world history. Homosexuals have been part of the world scene and culture from earliest recorded time (see Romans 1:26,27).

It is not our intention to speculate on the theories of homosexuality, whether there is a biological basis

or predisposition, or it is a condition of environment and choice. The fact is that our Church has numerous homosexual members, and She must reach out to them in love.

While the Church should support the full civil rights of homosexuals in our free and democratic society, She is under no obligation to endorse a lifestyle inconsistent with Her own teachings. Unions of male with male, or female with female, are contrary to the meaning and purposes of human sexuality.

While it is certainly possible for monogamous homosexual relationships to manifest some of the character of marital relationships, we must emphasize that even these fail in their understanding of the nature and purpose of marriage.

Marriage is given as a sacred context for the renewal of the image of God within us, through sacrificial love, and it can be expressed in physical love.

The incompleteness of the homosexual relationship is found in this: rather than reuniting the human image (male and female), it becomes fixated in the affection of an incomplete nature (either male or female). In this way, it "misses the mark" (amartia) and so can be described as sin.

This incompleteness is symbolized by the necessary barrenness of such relationships, where physical sexual expression not only does not produce offspring, but cannot.

In describing homosexual relationships as sin, let us not forget that heterosexual relationships, even faithful ones, are also sinful, if they are not bound within the context and meaning of marriage. Outside of Marriage, both heterosexuals and homosexuals are called to a life of celibacy. Their response to this call is a matter of free will, even if their sexual preference is not.

Recommendations

1. There needs to be much education, counseling and teaching in this area, bringing a new understanding of self to the Christian community, based on the image of God within us, not sexual preference.
2. We need to see celibacy as a "normal" lifestyle in the Church. The fellowship in our Church must make room for the single, unmarried, celibate and often homosexual members in the Parish, and not expect them to socialize with each other in order to get married.
3. Let us remember that the only thing that blocks our access to the Liturgy is our own sinfulness, and Christ is always willing to forgive.
4. In many ways, our homosexual members have a more difficult path, and very often not of their own choosing. They need spiritual support and encouragement from clergy and laity alike.

The Lord never promised us an easy spiritual life, but He stands by those with the fortitude and courage to take on the task.

Everyone cannot receive this saying, except for those to whom it is given. There are some eunuchs, who

were born that way; and there are some eunuchs, who were made into eunuchs by others; and there are some eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. If you can receive this saying, then receive it (St. Matthew 19:11,12).

WOMEN AND THE CHURCH

For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26-28

It would be unreasonable to assume that our Church has given women the recognition they so richly deserve, especially when one considers the inestimable importance of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Women have ministered in countless ways, in opposition to Judaic custom, which still has many vestiges in our Church.

The consideration of our three concerns should be tempered with a sensitivity to the present needs of women. Recommendations will follow in each section, based on the content of that section.

Liturgical Roles for Women

Participation in the Divine Liturgy (or any other service) should not be judged on whether one has an active role in that Service. Remember the story of Sts. Mary and Martha (St. Luke 10:38-42). Mary received the "good part," "the one thing necessary . . . which cannot be taken away," by attentively sitting at the feet of our Lord.

Our people need to learn again the meaning of the exhortation, "Wisdom, let us be attentive!" The greatest role in the Divine Liturgy is that of Communicant, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. Here, our gender is not an issue, only the purity and readiness of our intention and our souls.

We would consider the Apostolic injunction against women speaking during the Liturgy (I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:11) to be a holdover out of respect for Judaism, where women had no religious function at all.

Recommendation

Women may participate in choirs, as chanters, and as readers. They should be tonsured for these roles as men (should be - there are other implications for this tonsure, as will be seen below).

Purity Issues:

Here again we find Judaizing elements in the tradition of the Church. These elements need to be seen in the complete light of the transfiguring Christian message, and if they are to be maintained, let it be for a holistic symbolic value, rather than any even implied denigration of women. Entry of Women into Church after Childbirth (40 days) - This tradition, found in Leviticus 12:1-6, is kept in our Church, but not for the same reasons that ancient Judaism practiced it. It is also part of a wider context of

thanksgiving and blessing for both mother and child after childbirth. For ancient Judaism, it was an issue of ritual purity (an extensive treatment and rejection of ritual purity can be found throughout the writings of St. Paul).

For the Christian woman, it is part of the great and mystical honor of becoming a mother. In this context, we must renew the traditional blessing that precedes the 40 Day blessing. First there is the blessing after the delivery of the child. On the Eighth Day, instead of a Jewish ritual circumcision, we are to give the child its Christian name. The mother then continues to remain outside the worshipping community for 40 days as a commemoration of the 40 days spent by the Ever-Virgin Mary (St. Luke 2:22), which culminated in the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (feast - February 2nd). The Christian woman has this time, not only for the recovery of her body, but for the consideration of the new life she has brought into the world. Far from a negative connotation, this time should be of utmost importance in the spiritual life of the family.

Recommendation

Let the 40 days be a time of joy and reflection, not exclusion, which is consummated in the woman's presentation of her offspring in the Temple, and her reception of Holy Communion. If there is a good reason why the woman should be in the community before the 40 days, let the blessing be done early.

Churching of Female Infants

Along with the blessing of the mother (father and sponsors as well!), there is also the blessing of the child. It should be noted here that the official Service Books of the Church do not indicate that there should be a difference between the ways male and female children should be Churched.

The common practice today, that boys are brought into the Altar, while girls are blessed in front of the Iconostasion, is not substantiated in the "Euchologia." The argument that only male children should be carried around the Altar because only they may become Priests is a non-sequitur; as we will see later, not all males may become Priests.

Recommendation

Both male and female infants should be Churched in the same way, within the Altar. Service within the Altar (liturgical and otherwise) - There is a false notion in our Church that only males may go inside the Altar. This is patently false. Only those appointed to serve the Altar may enter it, and it is time that the clergy enforced this pious tradition.

May women serve within the Altar?

So then we must ask: May women serve within the Altar? Of course, as they are apportioned such ministries. This service may consist of cleaning (which is not dishonorable - even a Priest must "clean" the Holy Vessels), or direct assistance to the clergy during services.

As to the question of "Altar Girls," this relates to the wider issue of tonsuring women. "Cheirothesia," the placing of hands, accompanied by tonsure, is the traditional means of the appointment to liturgical ministry for men and women. In the early Church, there were even deaconesses who assisted at the

Baptisms of women (it should be noted that adults were baptized as children are today, naked and fully immersed - the deaconesses were used for the sake of propriety).

Recommendation

If a woman is tonsured as a reader, then she must be welcome in service to the Altar. It is time for our Church to recognize that these gifts are a normative part of Church life. Perhaps, we may see an increase in the monastic vocations of women (almost unheard of in the Americas) if more liturgical encouragement were to be given in the local parish.

Receiving Holy Communion and Menstruation

The practice of a woman not receiving Holy Communion during the time of her menstrual cycle is rooted in the ritual purity laws of Judaism. The woman who touched the hem of our Lord's garment (St. Mark 5:24-34) was also conscious of these purity laws, and so sought her healing in secret. But the Lord brought her faith to the light of day and accepted her.

Recommendation

We must affirm that natural bodily functions in no way bar anyone from participation in the Sacraments, but we should not condemn those who observe ancient traditions out of personal piety.

Ordination

Unity of the Priesthood - Although there is much that could be said on this subject, we must affirm that the Priesthood, as understood in the Orthodox Church, is a unified reality, which finds its only fullness in the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Priesthood belongs to Christ, not to any one person. Whether one is a Deacon, Presbyter, or Bishop, it is the same Priesthood, only a different degree of responsibility.

(It should be noted that in the New Testament, the offices of Bishop and Presbyter were so similar, that the terms are often used interchangeably.)

Even if one accepts that only males may become Priests, it should be pointed out that not all men have this opportunity. For example, a man must have all of his external bodily parts, he cannot be blind or deaf; if he is married, he must be married to his first and only wife (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). Thus we see the importance of the Priest as the living icon of Christ in the Divine Liturgy, for it is the celebration of the Liturgy, more than any thing else, that makes a Priest (Deacon, Presbyter, or Bishop) a Priest.

Why are there no women clergy? - This is a legitimate question, even in the light of a two thousand year old tradition, and deserves an adequate explanation.

Given the total human nature of our Lord, it does not seem possible, but we must consider the full historical implications of such a decision (as well as the reason it has not been decided so to this day).

Our Faith has its foundations in the historical reality of Jesus Christ, His Birth, Ministry, Passion,

Death, Resurrection, and Ascension - all of which our Church takes to be historical fact.

The reason why the clergy of our Church are male is because He came as a male (see the insert on human sexuality). This is part of the integral historic evidence that any icon of the Church manifests, that Our Lord was a real person (see I John).

In the Liturgy, the Priest, like the Icons, directly and mystically represent Christ Himself. The Priest is no more, but no less, Christ than any of the Icons are. This sacred, iconographic function is as necessary to the integrity of the Orthodox Faith as the Icons themselves. In this way, the historico-iconographic role of the clergy support and confirm the decisions of the Holy Seven Oecumenical Councils. It is not without reason that the Holy Spirit has guided the Church in this way for nearly two thousand years.

The Priestly Ministry of the clergy must be understood as a provision for this world, not the world to come, where there will be no more need for Mysteries and Promise, but Christ will be all in all. Moreover, we have all been called, in virtue of our Baptism and response to it, into the Royal Priesthood of Christ. Here there is neither male nor female, and we all have the same access to the Same Spirit of God.

Deaconesses (is there a liturgical/pastoral need?) - Since there were deaconesses in the early years of our Church (until the 4th century), it is reasonable to examine whether and under what circumstances this old treasure might bring forth new gifts.

Although the liturgical needs do not seem apparent, there may yet be pastoral needs (the affirmation of women's varied roles) which necessitate its reinstatement.

Recommendations

1. Care must be taken to teach the Faithful in the meaning of the Holy Priesthood, that there not be any misunderstandings about why the Priesthood is reserved for males.
2. Consistent with Orthodox tradition and theology, the office of deaconess must be restored.

There is much that can be done to involve women in creative and new ministries in the Church. There is also much to be done to educate our Faithful to the true meaning of our purposes as redeemed women and men, who are called into the fullness of communion with God.

Whatever our gender, Christ has called us into relationship with Himself, and as He Himself says, there will be new roles for all of us.

For whoever shall do the will of My Father, Who is in Heaven, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother.

St. Matthew 12:50

We hope and pray that these thoughts and recommendations will serve to inspire reflection and

dialogue on the needs of our Church today, as well as encourage thoughtful exchange of the clergy and the faithful on other issues. There is so much work of the Gospel to do; the world is waiting and so are our own Faithful.

The quest to become New Creations in Christ Jesus is a difficult and arduous one, but one that He has promised to be with us in. That promise is sure; He is the Same yesterday, today and forever. With boldness let us go forward to work the "works of God," confident in a more certain hope, that the One that is in us, is greater than anything that is in the world.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38,39

+ To God be the Glory +

+ Amen +

Selection of Hierarchy

George D. Karcazes, Co-Chair

Leon C. Marinakos, Co-Chair

INTRODUCTION

Membership in Orthodox Christian Laity has always been open to all baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians, including priests, bishops and archbishops. The OCL ministry was initiated by a group of lay persons, with strong encouragement and support of priests, some of whom have joined as members of the ministry, and others who have offered their moral support. OCL has also enjoyed input and moral support of several bishops who share OCL's belief that our church in America is in need of renewal.

The work of this Commission was authorized by the membership of the Orthodox Christian Laity at its Third Annual Meeting at St. Basil's Church in Chicago, Illinois in November, 1990. The Commission has had the benefit of advice from a number of individuals, including priests, who have reviewed some but not necessarily all, of the sections of this Report. They have acted as consultants to the Commission, but the conclusions of the Commission as contained in this Report are not necessarily those of the priests who acted as consultants.

This Report is not intended to be the last word on the questions it deals with. It is intended to generate discussion, and hopefully, to shed some light on those questions. It is our hope and our prayer that all Orthodox Christians living and practicing their faith in America, will engage in the dialogue this and the other Commission Reports are intended to spark, so that the Church can "function as a living organism in which all its members and parts are organically related and alive."

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION

One of the initially stated goals of the Orthodox Christian Laity ministry is: To restore the role of the laity in the election of the hierarchy. Our discussion will focus on the situation confronting members of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, but it will also consider Orthodox practice in general and as it exists in other Orthodox jurisdictions. Any discussion of this issue also raises the issues of Canonical unity of the Orthodox Church in America, Autonomy and Autocephaly, which is discussed in detail later in this book.

SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONY AND THE APOSTOLIC PATTERN

The process, if not the exact procedure, of the all important matter of selecting the spiritual leaders must trace its origins to the infant Apostolic Church and the testimony of the Church Fathers. The process of ordination or commissioning a spiritual leader of the Church in a formal-structured service, such as we know today, does not appear in the New Testament. However, what is mentioned there indicates some type of ceremony, albeit a very simple one:

- The twelve "chosen" and "sent" by Christ. (Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16).
- The election of Matthias (Acts 1:26).
- The seven elected and commissioned by the "laying on of hands." (Acts 6:6).
- The commissioning of Paul and Barnabas by the Antioch church by the "laying on of hands." (Acts 13:3).
- And the primary source of an ordination service comes from I Timothy 4:14; and II Timothy 1:6.

As for the election of those to be ordained and commissioned, the prominent lay theologian Panagiotis Trembelas of Athens, Greece (Religious and Ethical Encyclopedia) says:

Already from the first days of the establishment of the Church, with the question that arose to replace the fallen twelfth apostle, despite the fact that the apostolic chorus constitutes a special class in the Church, selected by the Lord directly and undertaking an extraordinary mission, the entire Church is invited to participate in the election of Peter "with the expression of public opinion and allowing the judgment of the masses. . . . Men were called brothers, by all present." This proclaimed in such a way that "none of the faithful there were split, neither male or female." (Chrysostom). Thus, women also participated in the election.

When after a while the matter arose about electing the seven deacons, "the twelve summoned the body of the disciples [i.e. the followers of Christ]" (Acts 6:2-3), and charged that body to select the seven. Chrysostom commenting on what happened says "the right to determine the number and the placing of the hands [ordination], the apostles reserved for themselves, but allow the people to elect the specific men."

THE PRACTICE IN THE TIME OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

In the period of the Apostolic Fathers following the time of the apostles, there are numerous references to the selection of hierarchy by the people, as well as the example being followed by the civic authorities. Some examples:

1. There is witness from the First Epistle to the Corinthians of Clement of Rome (Chapter 44,3) which proclaims that "the installed [bishops] by them [the Apostles], or the other worthy men agreed to by the whole church . . . these we believe cannot justifiably be eliminated from the liturgy." This witness takes on a special meaning if it is related to another of the author Lampridius, certifying about Alexander Severi (222-225) that leaving the election of rulers to the people, was following the practice of Christians and Jews (Vita. Alex Severi, Chapter 45).
2. During those same years, Cyprian of Carthage (+258) witnesses about Pope Cornelius that on the one hand, he became bishop by the judgment of God and Christ, and on the other hand, by the witness of almost all of the clergy and the vote of all of the people present and the college of

the old priests and good men (Epistle 10, Paragraph 8).

3. At the same time, there is the election of Pope Fabian, who was martyred in the reign of Decius (251-258). While all the brothers were deliberating about filling the widowed throne of Rome, he too came from his fields, at the moment when "in no one's mind did the thought exist that it was possible Fabian could be elected." But it is universally mentioned that a dove from the heights alighted on Fabian's head. "Following which the entire people as if by a single spirit divinely moved, carried him and placed him on the throne of the episcopate" (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History VI:29).
4. Examples of elections in which it is evident that the vote of the people was victorious and prevailing, are all too numerous in church history. Gregory of Nazianzos (Homily 21 8:35, 1089) certifies explicitly the witness that the elections were by "the vote of all the people" of such hierarchs as Athanasius the Great, Nectarios, John Chrysostom, Sisinius, Germanos, and Tarasias, all of Constantinople, Eustathius of Antioch, etc. Theodoritos (Ecclesiastical History V:982, 1217) says on the subject: "the entire city voted" and Socrates (Ecclesiastical History VI:2 67, 661) states that there was "a public vote by all the clergy and the voice of the people."

THE DECREES OF THE HOLY CANONS

The Holy Canons and other edicts have much to say about the election process.

1. Perhaps the oldest written monument, stipulating the election of bishops is an encyclical of the synod which convened around 258 in Carthage. It is included in the Number 67 (or 68) epistle of Cyprian in which it is stated, "The divine and apostolic tradition must be followed" so that concerning the ordination of a bishop it must be done "among the people of which the one to be ordained will be the leader, and the bishops neighboring on this diocese to assemble, and the bishop to be elected in the presence of the people, who know the life of each and witnesses about all the deeds of each."
2. Considered as contemporary is a stipulation in the Apostolic Decrees referred to earlier also in the Canons under the name of Hippolytos. There it is stated that the candidate bishop must be irreproachable in all respects with superior merits, elected by all the people. During a Sunday gathering of all, the presiding notable would ask the presbyter and the people if the candidate was the one they wanted as leader. If they would assent, there would be an examination by the bishops to ascertain if truly the proposed candidate is "witnessed by all as being worthy of the great and brilliant position." Thereafter the people once again were invited to acclaim a third time and the ordination followed. (Apostolic Decree VIII 5:1, 1069). The Synod of bishops had the right and duty to dissent in the election of the people whenever it was convinced that the proposed candidate was unworthy. However from the 18th Canon of the Synod of Antioch (314 A.D.) and the 18th Canon of the Ancyra Synod (314 A.D.), it is evident that the right of the people to elect their bishops remained strong.
3. The 4th Canon of the First Ecumenical Synod stipulates that a new bishop would be elevated by all the bishops in the province and the authority of the decision rests with the metropolitan of the province. However that Canon, in combination with the letter of the same Synod to the

Church of Alexandria, proves that the rights of the people were not being limited. The letter reaffirms the voting obligations of the people (Socrates, Ecclesiastical History I:9). "Thus also at the time of the First Ecumenical Synod, the people elected and the Metropolitan, with the Synod around him, ratified or invalidated the election" says theologian Trembelas.

4. The clever and the selfish have never been absent from the Church of Christ, and among the people, there are always the gullible and the easily deceived. Thus, very early extremes were noted, fomented, and aroused by ambitious clerics, who usurped vacant episcopal thrones by mob actions. These excesses were addressed in the 4th Canon of the First Ecumenical Council, the 16th Canon of the Antioch Synod, and the 13th Canon of the Laodician Synod. These Canons in effect say that a bishop having usurped a throne would be expelled even if "he were elected by all the people" and the mobs should not be permitted to elect those who would in the future be elevated to the hierarchy.
5. Practices involving the laity in the elevation to the hierarchy were also followed in the West. Thus, Leo the Great ordered that from all those proposed for the episcopacy, the one who would be preferred should be the person agreed to by clergy and laity (Epistle 14, 5, PL 54, 673). He also pronounced the classic: "He who is to be the superior of all should be elected by all." (Qui praefuturus est omnibus eligatur) (Epistle 10, 5, PL, 632). Also, Gregory the Great strongly espouses the right of the clergy and the laity to participate in the election of the bishop (Thomassinum, Vet. et Nov. Eccl. Discipl. H 7C 34 Paragraph 10).

SUCCESSION OF THE EPISCOPATE IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD

In Byzantine times Emperor Justinian (527-565) issued the Nearai No. 6, 123, 137 (see also the code Justinian, Book I, Title III, Law 42 about bishops). In those decrees among other provisions, it was stipulated that for the election of bishops the "clergy and the primates of the city, in which the bishop will be ordained" should come together and they should propose three individuals so that from them the best would be ordained (Neara 123, Chapter 1, In Vasilika Book III, Title I).

It is true that many extremes were perpetrated by the emperors, the kings and other rulers in the West, the mob interventions of the masses, and the coups by metropolitans and bishops. Especially in the election of the Patriarchs of Constantinople, as well as the filling of vacant thrones in the West, the emperors and kings dictated beforehand the ones they preferred, and afterwards the ones who voted were usually the simple executors of the sovereign commands. History also notes instances where synodic ordinations were not acceptable to the people, the ordinations were invalidated, and the elevated prelates were transferred to another see.

The ordination of the bishops took place usually in the widowed sees where the metropolitan would meet with all the bishops in the area and presided over the election. When the bishops were convinced that the candidate enjoyed the common approval, the first of the bishops would proclaim him officially in the church saying to the people among other things "this person, dear brethren, who has been elected as most worthy for the hierarchy, agreeing he is laudable, assist and proclaim: he is worthy. [Axios.]" With the proclamation of "Axios," the ordination ceremony would begin. This practice has now been reversed. The acclamation of "Axios," he is worthy, in today's ordinations is invited after the ordination sacrament has been completed, and not before as was the ancient practice. In other words, the

ordination is a fait accompli when the congregation is asked to give its assent, rendering the role of the people a subservient, acquiescing formality. In some instances, mainly in Greece, where congregations have asserted their free judgment to proclaim the ordained bishop as "Axios," unrest, turmoil, and even riots have ensued.

This information about the historical right and practice of the People of God to express their approval or disapproval of the one who will be their shepherd is seldom, if ever, mentioned by our current shepherds, inferring that things are being done as they always have been.

There is, in fact, no disagreement in the official Church, even today, over the testimony of the ancient Church in this regard. The evidence is unmistakable and incontrovertible. Since Constantine the Great, however, lay participation in the election of bishops increasingly meant imperial involvement. The election of the Ecumenical Patriarch was virtually the Emperor's prerogative as the Byzantine Age moved on. For example, St. John Chrysostom was, by imperial decree, transferred from Antioch and enthroned as Patriarch in Constantinople (Emperor Arcadius). Emperors banished and replaced bishops at will, often over the protests of the Bishop of Rome. The struggle for control between emperors and the institutional church may have led to some of the restrictions on the role of the laity at large in the selection of bishops.

HOW BISHOPS ARE ELECTED TODAY IN GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE

Professor James Steve Counelis has written an excellent analysis of the four Constitutions of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America under which our Archdiocese has functioned since its establishment. The article appears in the 26th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress Album, San Francisco, July, 1982. He concluded his analysis of the four constitutions with this personal observation:²

This writer believes that the development of an operative democratic church within the title of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America is inevitable, though he may not live to see it. Further, this democratization will occur only when the American Church takes seriously the theological anthropology of the Church and sees that that anthropology becomes the basis of a Christ-like church . . . a Christ-like ecclesiology in living practice. The true ecclesial independence of the American Orthodox Church rests in the achievement of a Christ-like ecclesiology, for creativity, wisdom and piety will be her gifts. The Church is one priesthood of believers, clergy, and lay, with one Head - the Christ.

If it is indeed inevitable that the Orthodox Church in America is going to develop into an "operative democratic church" as Dr. Counelis predicts, the recognition of the theological anthropology of the church must come from the entire church, not only from a few of its members. It will also be necessary for the church to confront, and reverse, the "Constitutional Regressions" noted by Dr. Counelis in his analysis of the four (1922, 1927, 1931 and 1977) Constitutions of the Archdiocese. As Dr. Counelis notes:

[A] document by document review of the four Constitutions reveals that two retrogressions have occurred . . . (1) the participation and approval of the archdiocesan constitution by laymen and lower clergy; (2) the method of selecting bishops.

"The Constitution of 1922 was developed and approved by the 2nd Clergy-Laity Congress in 1922 The 1927 revision . . . was approved at a general meeting in the then Cathedral of St. Basil in Chicago. As to the monarchical constitution of 1931, it is a well known fact that it was imposed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Government. And as for the 1977 Constitution, it was never presented at a referendum at any Clergy-Laity Congress, though a small committee of bishops, lower clergy and laymen participated in its construction. It appears that the Ecumenical Patriarchate was more Christian and more trusting in the past than in the present.

The method of selecting bishops has also retrogressed since the 1922 and 1927 Constitutions. In these two earlier constitutions, the Clergy-Laity Congress had the opportunity to submit the names of three clergymen for transmission to the American Synod of Bishops. They, in turn, would nominate one of the three, sending that candidate's name on to Constantinople. The Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate would accept the decision of the American Synod and would elect that candidate to episcopal office. No such process is available in the 1977 constitution; and certainly nothing is said in the 1931 constitution. In the 1977 constitution there is a vaguely worded reference to the American Synod of Bishops consulting with the Archdiocesan Council, on which laymen and lower clergy are present. However, the Ecumenical Patriarchate reserves the right to name bishops to American dioceses. Obviously, the ancient tradition of the local diocese selecting its own bishop and proclaiming him "Axios," is dead. There is no question that the 1922 and 1927 Constitutions were superior to the 1977 Constitution in both the constitutional procedures and the method of selecting bishops. [Emphasis Supplied]

Notwithstanding Professor Counelis's commentary, the evidence seems to indicate that this "right" of the Patriarchate exists in theory rather than in practice. The practice appears to be that the Archbishop handpicks his bishops and the Ecumenical Patriarch simply rubberstamps his choices and validates them for consecration. However, there is some anecdotal evidence that on one occasion in recent years, Constantinople withheld.

HOW BISHOPS ARE ELECTED IN OTHER ORTHODOX JURISDICTIONS

In Russia, where the Church is only now emerging from seventy years of often brutal suppression, the Patriarch of Moscow was recently elected by 66 bishops, 66 priests and 66 laypersons representing each of the 66 Dioceses. The Commission has not been able to determine how the priests and laypersons were selected, but the ancient tradition of participation by priests and laity in the election was reaffirmed.

The Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and the Antiochan Archdiocese here in America, also maintain at least to some extent the tradition of lay participation in the election of its Bishops. However, the Commission has received anecdotal evidence that OCA Hierarchy has on at least one occasion reversed an election in which the laity had voted.

As this Report is discussed in the coming months, we hope to develop more information about both the theory and the practice of other Orthodox jurisdictions. We invite comments, articles and information from all of our readers, which we will share with the entire Church.

SUGGESTED PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT - THE GREEK ORTHODOX JURISDICTION

There seems to be little dispute that the laity has had an inherent and historically confirmed right to participate in the process by which priests and bishops are selected. Professor Lewis J. Patsavos of the Holy Cross School of Theology has written:

Then there is the very sensitive issue to consider of the election of the clergy by the laity. The prominent role given the laity in the election of Matthias to replace Judas is an indisputable fact. It set the pace for what was to follow in this regard during the next three centuries. Abuses, however, and the ever-increasing influence of secular rulers in the affairs of the Church had as their consequence the abolition of the God-given right of the laity to elect its spiritual leaders. Sufficient historical precedents do exist as a reminder of what was once an inherent right of the laity, even though the final act of laying on of hands was always the exclusive privilege of the episcopacy. [Emphasis Supplied]

All Orthodox are familiar with the now ritualistic shouts of "Axios" (he is Worthy) which the laity are called upon to proclaim at every ordination of a priest and elevation of a hierarch, which in Orthodox Churches must occur during a Liturgy. Although we have heard of no instance in the Greek Archdiocese in America, stories abound of instance where the laity in Greece have actually caused the proceedings to be halted by their shouts of Unworthy, which required the convening of an investigation into the reasons for rejection. Such occurrences are surely not to be encouraged, but they may disclose a weakness in the process which excludes the laity from any meaningful role in the process which permits only such a public last ditch venue for the expression of the laity's will.

This right is still exercised, albeit in a sometimes purely symbolic manner, in some Orthodox Churches. In the Church of Cyprus, for example, the laity participate in the election of the Archbishop. Likewise, in Russia, a new Patriarch of Moscow was recently elected at a meeting called for that purpose which included bishops, clergy, and laity representing every Diocese. If the laity in Cyprus and Russia do not exclusively exercise their God-given right to select their spiritual leaders, they at least have the opportunity to participate in the process. Any effort to involve the laity in the selection process in any meaningful manner must take into account the cautionary admonition of Professor Patsavos that:

Only believing and worshipping laypersons should be allowed to assist in the governing of the Church; nominal Christians should at all costs be excluded.

The issue should not be whether the laity should have a voice, rather the issue should be what that voice should be and how, and by whom should it be expressed? Regrettably, in the past, it can be argued that in some instances the least spiritually qualified were involved. Even today the risk persists. Historically, wealthy, secular-minded barons in the court of the Church could cast a decisive vote. In the recent past the wealthy merchant class of Phanariots in Constantinople were influential in elections of the Patriarch. In the Soviet Union, it is suspected that the KGB has played a role in the selection of Bishops. The restoration of lay participation as such is not necessarily a guarantee that the laos, or People of God, is participating. The baron-type of laity can turn into rubber-stamping the preference of some Church prelate or primate. We do not need that in the Church in America.

Improper External Influences

One objection that can be made to lay participation in the election of bishops is the possibility that secular influences will be introduced into the choice. However, it is likely that the current practice of the Greek Orthodox Church is far more vulnerable to such influences than is a system in which the laity exercise their appropriate role.

The "Church," which we define for our purposes here, as all of the Orthodox communicants who find themselves in America today, regardless of ethnic jurisdiction, enjoys total freedom from any influence from any secular leaders of the United States Government. The genius of the Founding Fathers of this Nation was in their understanding that Religion would flourish in an environment where it was not only free, but totally separate from, and unsupported by the Government. If there are any influences of secular rulers in the affairs of the Orthodox Church in America, they are the influences which the Turkish Government has over decisions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate located in Constantinople and which the Greek Government exercises over the Greek Archdiocese, directly through the Church of Greece, or indirectly through its influence over the Ecumenical Patriarchate. To a greater or lesser extent, other foreign governments, such as Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Syria, etc. may exercise, or attempt to exercise, some influence through the Mother Churches of those jurisdictions over the affairs of their daughter Churches in America.

In order for the Orthodox Church in the United States to address the problem of the unwarranted and improper influences of secular rulers especially the Greek and Turkish Governments, the Church in America must define its existence in terms of its own needs, realities and self-governance, while at all times maintaining its ties with its historical past and roots. This discussion cannot avoid the question of the establishment of one Autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.³

Although this issue will be discussed by the Commission which is studying the issue of Orthodox Unity, it is one which has to be addressed as well in our discussion concerning the elimination of improper influences from the election of bishops. Clearly, the constitutional guarantees that have existed for more than two hundred years in this Country are so well-established that there is no question of U. S. governmental interference with the affairs of the Church in America. A single, united and autocephalous Orthodox Church in America would be able to elect its bishops and patriarch without interference from secular rulers. If the model we wish to establish for Church governance of an Orthodox Church in America is closer to that of the first three centuries of our Church, and further from the Byzantine "Emperor-Patriarch" or the subsequent "Sultan-Patriarch" models, there has never been a better time or a better place for the establishment or re-establishment of such a model.

Christianity flourished during its first three centuries, in spite of persecution because of the spiritual fervor of its adherents. Although the Church achieved political recognition after its establishment by Emperor and later Saint Constantine, and material gains during the next several centuries, the decline in spiritual life led to the establishment of the Monastic Movement. Most will agree that the spiritual life of the faithful is damaged when the Church becomes established and intertwined with the affairs of State. This indeed is one of the central insights of the American Bill of Rights, that both the State and the Church function best when they are independent of one another.

As we have seen, the involvement and participation of the laity in the election of the clergy of all ranks has roots in Christianity's earliest days. Another aspect of the clergy-laity relationship has a

geographical dimension to it.

The episcopate is the essence of the church only because it belongs within the sacramental framework of the believing community. According to Orthodox teaching the bishop is the chief celebrant of all the sacraments, with the priests receiving their limited sacramental authority from the bishop. Thus, the bishop should be a local chief pastor. "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be," writes St. Ignatius of Antioch. This would be impossible and meaningless if the bishop is hundreds, or even thousands of miles away. "There is one altar as there is one bishop with the priests and deacons." (To the Phil. 3) A bishop could not be at the altar of all churches at the same time as would be expected in a jurisdiction the size that is under the supervision of the "Archbishop of North and South America and Exarch of the Atlantic and Pacific." The community/parish model was a limited number of faithful in a limited geographical area under one bishop. The whole church was the local church found most often within the bounds of a single city. For if the prayer of one or two has so much power, how much greater is that of the bishop and of the whole church? (To the Eph. 3) The bishop is viewed always in connection with the council of priests. The collegiality of the priests is directly related to the authority of the ruling bishop. This too is comprehensible only on a local level.

When St. Ignatius states: "You must continue to do nothing apart from the bishop," he is referring to a bishop who is physically accessible and not a remote ceremonial figurehead hundreds or thousands of miles away. Otherwise the life of the church would be paralyzed and remain at an impasse caused by inaction, indecision and anxiety arising from the remoteness of the bishop. It is, therefore, clear that St. Ignatius sees the bishop as a father of a small, tightly-knit spiritual family in which the lay members and the priests are in close proximity to the bishop. "Be obedient too to the priests as the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope" demonstrates the authority of the collegiality of the priests within a given area who maintain a close proximity with the ruling bishop. The bishop is a typos or icon of Christ only in a local setting. The wisdom of the practices of the early church having localized bishops (in the fourth century, for example, four hundred bishops existed in Asia Minor) has relevance in our times as well.

The human heart is lashed with the same kinds of failings throughout the ages and pride has never ceased to be among the most pernicious evils. Bishops are not immune from this sin. Indeed the early church recognized this and used the practice of limiting the geographic sway of bishoprics to reinforce the dictates of spiritual humility. Many lay members of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South America apparently view church governance in terms of the Roman Catholic rather than the Orthodox model. Generations of adherence to the principle of blind obedience coupled with little, if any, religious education have conditioned the laity into acceptance of a mind-set that varies between indifference or hopeless exasperation on the one hand, and blissful hero-worship bordering on cult-like adoration of visible "Ethno-Religious" leaders, on the other hand. Few among the appointed lay leaders in the American Church seem to be aware that "the Patriarch of Constantinople's role is essentially that of a convener rather than that of a chief executive of a closely organized corporation. Orthodoxy is governed, on the world scene, by a spirit of consensus, rather than by directives from above For the Orthodox the head of the Church is Christ, both in spirit and in reality." (Rev. Dr. Stanley Harakas.) We believe that a return to the democratically elected bishops and decentralized authority of the early Church represents a model for the modern Church in America.

More than twenty years ago, Archimandrite Eusebius Stephanou addressed the issue of laity involvement in church governance as follows:

The Church is the Body of Christ consisting of laity and clergy. It is the prerogative and obligation of Christ's followers to state their views after investigating the issues. So long as they sit back with indifference, the Church can never function as a living organism in which all its members and parts are organically related and alive.

The "they-know-what-they're-doing attitude" toward our hierarchy can only injure the interests of the Church. It is time this mentality changed. It is said that people get the governments they deserve. This holds true especially when applied to the Church. We get Church leadership we deserve and the decisions we deserve. We cater also to the equally harmful "What-do-the-laity-know" attitude of the clergy.

Who can doubt that the Church in America has come of age? But the priests and laity must show their age and maturity by doing more thinking and talking on the issues confronting the Church

If the Orthodox Church is the best-kept secret in America, and if it represents a spiritual alternative for the ninety million un-churched Americans who are looking for the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it is because in its theology, beliefs, and liturgical practices it has remained true to the Church of the first three centuries. By ridding itself of the influences of the secular rulers of the Old World, the Church in America can turn its attention to Christ's Great Commission and to educating its laity in the Word of God, so that as believing and worshipping laypersons, they can assist in the governing of the Church, including the election of their spiritual leaders, without themselves being guilty of abuses in the exercise of their ministry.

Proposed Selection Procedures

We have seen that the early church has provided us with models which not only have relevance today, but which are uniquely appropriate for conditions in America. Two models that we believe must be adopted are: (a) lay participation in the election of their church leaders, and (b) a restricted geographic area over which church leaders have jurisdiction. Both models are consistent with Orthodox teachings and traditions, as is the tradition of married bishops. These are not revolutionary departures for the Orthodox Church.

The dramatic change advocated by OCL has already begun to take place. That change consists of generating the necessary study and dialogue that will engage the laity, priests and hierarchs in the search for approaches that will serve the Church in the way Christ would approve. This search must be conducted with prayer, mutual respect and love.

Some will propose that before the laity is included in the election of bishops, priests should first be given the right to elect their bishop. Only after the right of priests to elect their bishop has been established, should the laity be included, as a "natural next step." (See suggestions of Archimandrite Eusebius Stephanou under Concluding Thoughts.)

Others will propose systems intended to insure that "nominal and uninformed" laity are excluded from the process. Some will propose that candidates for bishop be nominated only by bishops, or only by bishops and priests with the final election to be made by representatives of bishops, priests and the laity. Others will propose that lots be drawn either for the selection of the lay or other representatives to the body that chooses the candidates or elects the bishop from among the candidates, or as the method

for final selection from among the candidates. Changes in jurisdiction will follow as a natural consequence of Orthodox Unity and Autocephaly, but neither will happen if the entire Church in America does not discuss and reach a consensus on these two important issues. Priests and bishops who refuse to engage in dialogue with the laity about these and any other issues confronting the Church, do violence to the concept of conciliarity which is basic to the ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church. (Commission 34:3). The ordination of married priests as bishops may require action at the forthcoming Great and Holy Council of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Preliminary meetings to discuss the agenda have been held in 1961, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973 and 1976. No date has been set as yet for the meeting itself but, once again, the consensus of the Church cannot be arrived at if the matter is not discussed.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Obviously, if the laity and the priests are to regain a voice in the selection of their bishops, archbishops and, yes, patriarchs - changes need to be made both in the Constitution of the Archdiocese, in the role that the laity and clergy exercise in the selection of representatives on the Archdiocesan Council, and in the planning and execution of the Clergy-Laity Congress. The time has come for the laity and the priests to recognize their responsibilities as members of the Body. Only when they do, can we hope to realize the goal of an operative democratic church in America.

In view of the current authoritarian control that the Archdiocese exercises over the agenda, planning and conduct of the Clergy-Laity Congress, the necessary changes can be made only by an outpouring of positive activity on the part of priests and laity. Generating that activity is obviously one of the major goals of the OCL ministry.

As long as priests view their attendance at Clergy-Laity Congresses as nothing more than an opportunity to have a reunion with their classmates from Holy Cross (usually subsidized in whole or in part by their parishes), as long as large numbers of parishes cannot afford the outrageous costs of attending Clergy-Laity Congresses, as long as parish council presidents, and other lay delegates view their attendance at Clergy-Laity Congresses as opportunities to attend gala banquets and luncheons featuring political speakers and secular dignitaries, as long as the majority of Archdiocesan Council members are appointed by the Archbishop, and all automatic delegates to the Clergy-Laity Congress, little progress will be made on the key issues facing the Church.

The issue of lay participation in the election of bishops is not a new issue. Twenty-two years ago, in the December, 1969 issue of *The Logos*, Archimandrite Eusebius Stephanou wrote:

Lay participation in the election of the clergy, be they priests, bishops, or patriarchs, is normative in Orthodox practice and dates back to the earliest days of Christianity. Hence, the established custom of wording the announcement of such elections at the hour of consecration with: By vote of both clergy and laity. In later times it was revised thus: By vote and approval of the God-loving Priests and Clergy of the City of . . .

This is the form used currently by the consecrating bishop who is about to lay hands with two other bishops upon the candidate. But ironically not only the laity, but even the priests today in the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate are kept out of the elections of their bishops. To take an example of close proximity, neither priests nor laity in the Greek Archdiocese of America are consulted

in the election of auxiliary bishops, least of all, of the archbishop. No practice in the Orthodox Church could be more untenable and harmful both canonically and historically. Only proper enlightenment and religious maturity can displace the ignorance and religious infantilism that in this respect sustain the docility and inertia among the priests and laity in the Greek Archdiocese. [Emphasis Supplied]

Father Stephanou has assisted this Commission as a consultant, and we asked him to share his current thoughts on this issue with us. He wrote to us the following:

I believe the issue of lay participation in the election of the Archbishop and Bishops is directly related to the mode of administration in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.

It is generally recognized that the current mode of administration of the Church is extremely centralized: the entire Church on two continents of the whole western hemisphere comes under the authority of one prelate. His power is virtually absolute in terms of administering the internal affairs of this imperial-sized jurisdiction. In effect he is not answerable to anyone. He handpicks his bishops and prevails over the Ecumenical Patriarchate to endorse his choices. The priests are never consulted. The result is that they have shown an apathy in this regard, indifference and cynicism. The auxiliary bishops likewise have fallen into this mental state.

Our first concern should be the decentralization of the Administration of the Archdiocese. This should have first priority. It is an exercise in futility to strive for lay participation in the election of the episcopate within a framework of religious totalitarianism. Such a concern for decentralizing takes on a special urgency in view of subtle efforts already underway to abrogate the new synodical system and to restore the older system of one ruling Archbishop with several auxiliary bishops. Local diocesan authority is being eroded step by step, presumably because the synodical system has failed.

Not only should the synodical system be preserved at all costs, but it should be reinforced, improved and perfected. It is not the synodical system, as such, that is inadequate and defective, but possibly the men who are handpicked as diocesan bishops are inadequate and lacking in leadership ability and competence. It is not logical nor fair to discredit the synodical system, therefore, when we consider the fact that the ruling Archbishop selects men for the episcopate who are generally docile, subservient and harmless to his supreme authority.

There is more likelihood for success in the effort for lay participation in the election of the episcopate within the framework of a decentralized mode of administration. To decentralize the Church is to centralize Christ as the true head of the Church. Spiritual Renewal means to bring Christ out of obscurity and to allow Him to govern His Church which he purchased by His own Blood. Too long have men usurped the position of Christ!

But when God's people in collective disobedience and rebellion prefer idols in the place of the sovereignty of Christ, divine judgment falls upon them and He condemns them by giving them the idols they choose.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has from the beginning cherished the prerogative to elect the ruling archbishop for the Greek Archdiocese in America. They will need a lot of convincing otherwise in order to change at this point and begin consulting the laity in this country, or for that matter, even the

priests.

It is more logical and effective to strive first for the rights of priests in the election of bishops. How can the laity expect to be consulted in this regard when the priests themselves are totally excluded from the process of election? The Orthodox Christian Laity will be more likely to succeed on this issue if it were to first champion the rights of the priests to be involved in the election process. Once the priests are consulted in such elections, it will be far easier for the laity to follow suit and claim their prerogatives.

Priority, therefore, should be given to re-establishing the rights of the Presbyterate to participate in the election of the Episcopate. Normally a bishop is elected from within the ranks of the priests (or presbyters). If a bishop is truly "theobroletos" (singled out by God), as he is called liturgically in his pheme, then in what better manner can the divine choice be manifested than by the consensus of his fellow-presbyters?

It should be pointed out, however, that in the Early Church the laity very often decided by public acclamation their choice for the position of the local bishop who was to shepherd them. It was not the presbyters. The reason for this was simply because in that early period of the Church the bishop usually exercised pastoral authority over one city. In one sense the chief parish priest of a mother parish church in our own day is what the bishop was back then. City-bishops was the norm in the Early Church (kata polin episcopoi). Thus it was only fitting for the laity to decide who their spiritual shepherd was to be. He was a man whom they knew possibly from childhood and recognized him for his godliness and virtue. He was not a stranger coming from a distant city or country.

The vote of the laity must spring from the grass roots level of the Church, otherwise lay participation runs the danger of being no improvement over the current practice. If lay participation is defined as laity appointed by bishops, or even priests, or laity who are prominent only for their material wealth or social or professional standing with no thought to their spiritual standing and Christian character, it is doubtful that the results will be pleasing to God.

Whether, as Father Stephanou states, it will be easier or even more logical for the laity to regain the right to participate in the election of bishops by first championing the rights of priests to do so, is a question we do not answer here. It is sufficient to note that when OCL advocates the right of the laity to participate in the process, it does not mean to exclude the right of priests to also participate in the process. As we have noted elsewhere in this Report, the answer must come from the entire Church. We invite you to join in the deliberations. Every baptized, chrismated Orthodox Christian has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. To the extent that any of us remains indifferent and uninvolved we deprive the Church of the fullness it can only enjoy when we are all functioning, integral parts of the Body. Let us all join together and our efforts will surely be blessed.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

INTRODUCTION

Laity have the right to let their pastors know about their spiritual needs and how they can be fulfilled; to advise Church leaders about what is good for the Church; to form associations of like-minded persons; to hold meetings; to enjoy a good name and reputation; to enjoy academic freedom; to perform certain roles in the liturgy; to oversee Church finances; to receive protection from illegally imposed sanctions. (McManus)

It is an un-Christian and un-Orthodox idea that there can exist a division between the "material" and the "spiritual" in Church life, or a division in the powers and privileges in these two spheres between the Laity and the Clergy.

Today the truly Orthodox conciliar approach to the totality of Church life and activity, including everything from the collection and disbursing of funds to the celebration of the Sacraments, is increasingly understood as the concern of ALL God's People, both Clergy and Laity (Hopko).

One often hears the cry that the Church is becoming too secular, that its material preoccupations too often impinge or influence the spiritual; that the Laity is becoming more and more disenchanted by its exclusion from the governance of the Church by the Hierarchy.

But as our Christian brothers quoted above indicate, there is no real problem for the true followers of our Lord. There is no "split" in the Church between the secular and the spiritual, but rather a cohesive bonding, or "Syndiakonia," that as the Body of Christ the Church is administered according to Christian principles, eschewing the techniques used by purely secular institutions for their funding goals.

It is the prayer of Orthodox Christian Laity (OCL) that the recommendations and ideas suggested in the following Commission treatise: Church Administration and Accountability will help open windows for more effective Church Governance.

Utilization of the substantial Laity resources of talent and professional skills and experience must be harnessed by the Archdiocese and Dioceses to help our Orthodox Church meet the challenges of the coming new century.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

It is the aim of this commission to study the strengths and weaknesses of the administration of our institutional church. If our Church on all its levels, Archdiocese, Diocese and Parish, were being managed efficiently and effectively, there would be no issues to discuss, no problems to solve, no need to conduct this study and prepare this paper. Therefore, let us state briefly the specific purposes and goals of our report:

- To review significant and relevant existing regulations, practices and procedures regarding administration and financial accountability;

- To identify, examine and define areas of special concern;
- To explore, describe and suggest ways and means to address the issues, and make recommendations for improving the administrative structure of our institutional church so that it may operate more efficiently and effectively.

ISSUES - POINTS OF CONFLICT

We fully understand that our religious organization is firmly based on the doctrines and canons of our faith. This report is not dealing with that aspect of our church; we fully accept and understand that our religious dogma clearly prescribes matters of faith and spiritual practices. We are, however, concerned with those aspects of managing and administering the church institution so that the faithful can approach it for their spiritual needs without thoughts and feelings of distrust, or suspicion of administrative and financial irregularities. We believe our church administration suffers from careless or inept management, and violations of the trust of the communicants. Relative to mismanagement or careless administration, much of this is the result of inexperience, incompetence, and on occasion abuse of power.

Briefly, the issues revolve around such specific areas as:

1. The financial relationship between the parish and the archdiocese; the administrative authorities of the parish council and the parish priest, the diocese, or with the archdiocese;
2. The absence of cooperation between and among these levels of authority or persons of "power";
3. The need to know accurate data regarding financial matters on the three levels, parish, diocese, and archdiocese;
4. Who controls what within each level of church existence;
5. The need to know how money is spent and for what reason;
6. The contradictory practices that exist on each level; and
7. The reasons for some irregularities and damaging procedures that destroy parts of entire communities or individuals.

Very often questions have arisen by some individuals around the country as to whether or not our church institution(s) have developed around a "personality cult." The variety of issues we encountered only serve to damage the worth of a parish or diocese or archdiocese. Thus, we believe our problems cannot continue to be systematically ignored; they must be identified and addressed, and ultimately appropriate solutions sought.

Certainly, this report cannot and will not address ALL the issues or questions, but to some degree will attempt to analyze major problems and then offer suggestions for reconstruction.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH

Before we proceed, it is important that we explain HOW we are using the phrase "institutional church." First, we do not capitalize the word church - so that we can separate Church (capital c) meaning the theological or religious institution, that segment which concerns itself with doctrine, from the temporal or secular aspects.

We recognize that the term institution is used with different meanings by various people. We are using it to mean a system of human activity, having considerable and reasonable permanence, a legal entity organized for specific purpose(s), required to abide by some fundamental or specific rules and laws, in our case to serve and complement our beliefs in Orthodoxy and sustain the Church in this country.

ADMINISTRATION

We must also provide the reader with a basic explanation of how we are using the term administration. An institution must have direction, must be managed by persons who accept the responsibility for the proper, efficient and effective operation of that institution. To carry on the "business" for which the unit was organized requires order, goals, rules and regulations, in short, knowledge of management and administration. Those persons who conduct the work of the unit need to have the necessary knowledge, expertise, and skills to carry on the work in accordance with the goals, needs, and purposes of the unit. Administration includes the qualities of leadership.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We use this term to refer to the responsibility a person "in office," or appointed to a specific function and role by a group or a representative of a group, or a person in a significant position while representing a group or organization, HAS for explaining actions that occurred while he or she is in that position of responsibility, especially as the actions, results, or reasons affect the institution.

Any person in any kind of leadership position, be it major or minor, or in a position of responsibility, especially if financial responsibility is involved, must account for his or her actions and outcomes. We especially emphasize financial accountability, for this is an area that has damaged many a church community. Accountability, as we use it, includes all levels of our church institution, parish, diocese, archdiocese. The institutional church is responsible to the people who belong to it; to the members who support it both physically, morally, and financially. We expect our leaders, church employees and volunteers to maintain ethical standards with respect to their work as clergy or laity serving the community (parish, diocese, archdiocese). Since they are the persons responsible for conducting the day-to-day affairs of our church institution, they are responsible for the efficient functioning of the church and are obligated to report to those of us who form the "body" of the church. It is essential that complete information about the operations of the church be reported regularly through the Orthodox Observer, the Clergy-Laity Congress, the Archdiocese's Council and other public bodies of the church.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Those of us who go to our church and offer our service certainly have to be confused by the way our

church institution is structured administratively. As one of our bishops put it recently, "The church at the Archdiocese level is Papal, and on the parish level it is congregationalist" (a form of church government in which each local religious unit is independent and self-governing).

We would like to examine and redefine the roles of the clergy and laity on the parish, diocesan, and archdiocesan levels.

The Parish Level

Because of the way the parishes were formed in the early years of our Church in America, the lay people who founded the parishes would seek out a priest and hire him, or even appoint someone with some theological background to act as their priest. Back in those days there was no formal institution, an archdiocese as we have today, that could administer the religious needs of a community and provide the priests to the parishes. Consequently, the parishes looked upon the priest as an employee to be hired and fired as they saw fit. Peter Kourides has described the early years in his booklet, *The Evolution of the Greek Orthodox Church in America and its Present Problems*. Those first years saw the priest's job as one of performing religious services, performing and keeping records of sacraments, perhaps even being responsible for the upkeep of the physical building housing the Church, and, if asked, to be the teacher of Greek lessons, and little else.

As our Church developed and expanded, this attitude and practice of the employer-employee relationship on the part of the lay leaders became, in some instances, a source of misunderstanding and dissension. This is one point of conflict that must be corrected. We are now an advanced religious and social institution in the Americas; we have established procedures and requirements which we must follow. The religious life and in many cases, the social and cultural lives of our communities are fully dependent upon the leadership and supervision of our priest and we must recognize this if we are to do the true work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are at a point in our institutional development where we must acknowledge our parish priest as the religious head of the parish, just as we acknowledge our Bishop as head of the Diocese, and the Archbishop as head of the Archdiocese. We have, for the most part, well-educated and trained clergyman whose sole purpose is to lead the religious life of a parish. If we acknowledge and respect the roles of our clergy, we should not object to their authority in matters of FAITH and THEOLOGY. However, we also know that occasionally theological decisions are blended with the personal attitudes of either a bishop or a priest, and then a conflict probably arises. For instance, in one diocese a priest may permit the marriage of an interfaith couple to take place with the minister of the non-Orthodox party present; and in another diocese the priest will prohibit such a service. There are many other instances and examples of contradictory actions within the Greek Orthodox Church. Another example, the sponsor (Godparent) of a Greek Orthodox child would be a Roman Catholic person. These are only two examples; there are numerous examples when religious rules were "waived" or ignored for a variety of questionable reasons. Sometimes it appears that selective religious rules are adhered to or bent to fit the occasion.

By the same token, the clergy must recognize and accept the proper role that the laity must assume in the administration of the church parish. How, you may ask, can we accomplish this? Let's consider the following:

1. In theological matters, the clergy should be the final authority; but, when asked, should be able to give a verifiable explanation.
2. In the matters of administration the responsibility must be shared by both laity and clergy; and this is explicitly stated in ARTICLE V, PARISH ADMINISTRATION in the Regulations.
3. When it comes to the formation of a Parish Council, the election of laity to serve on that body must NOT be conducted as a popularity contest NOR as a political contest. This unit may well be the most significant body in the entire church organization - BECAUSE it is responsible for the well-being, growth, and cultivation of the parish community. Therefore, these parish leaders must be committed to the purpose of the Parish Council, must be dedicated to service to the Church - and their selection and election to serve on the Parish Council should be based on their religious dedication, abilities and competence, past experience, service and participation in parish life. The Special Regulations and Uniform Parish Regulations very clearly spell-out in great detail the qualifications for members to serve on the Parish Council. (See Articles VIII through XVII of the Regulations.) All too often, we see groups with special interests - interests that have nothing to do with the spiritual life of the Church - campaign and gain control of the Parish Council just so their special interests will be met; thus they dominate the life of the parish, and in all probability suffocate and stunt the life of the community. And, sadly, we often see parishes divided and ruined by such thoughtless and damaging tactics.

Many years ago, as many people may remember, parishes became divided along political lines - not by American politics, but by the politics of Greece. What do Greek politics have to do with our religious life in America? This must not be construed to mean that we advocate denial of or indifference to our heritage and cultural background. But we believe our Church and institutional church must be concerned primarily with our spiritual life. There is no room nor is our parish community a place for political battles. It is our belief that the Church as a whole, from the parish to the Archdiocese, must avoid entering the political arenas of either the United States or Greece in the name of the Greek Orthodox Church. We believe that the Church should be extremely careful about including political figures, either Greek or American, at events of the Church. The pulse of the community should be taken before the church is unwisely used for political advancement of individuals. Further, we must certainly understand, and adhere to the laws of this country, especially as they pertain to the separation of Church and State. We owe our lives, achievements, and successes to what THIS country has offered us; so we are obliged to live by the laws of this country.

We who are of Greek birth or descent are fortunate to have many secular organizations, such as, AHEPA, AHI, and others which have faithfully and competently championed the cause of the Greek-American people. They are the ones who should be looked to and should be encouraged to assume the responsibility of our political, cultural, and linguistic needs.

1. A fourth aspect: In making the Parish Council truly representative of the community the Parish Bylaws should have a provision to include the President of the Philoptochos - perhaps the most vital laity group in implementing people-to-people missions.
2. Consider Standing Committees established in parishes to address all the needs of a particular community. The chairpersons of the Standing Committees should be selected by the combined judgment and efforts of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council. These Standing Committees

should be involved in Parish Council business only when it is necessary for them to report on their activities or projects. The persons chosen to chair the Standing Committees should have some appropriate background, expertise or proven experience in the role to which they are assigned.

For instance, some of the Standing Committees which could be considered are these: (in random order)

- Day Care Center for children - where needed and facilities exist.
- Adult Religious Education - Spiritual Renewal, Bible Study, Preparation for Interfaith Marriage and Chrismation.
- Orthodox Unity - Interaction with other Orthodox Churches in the area.
- Mission and Outreach - reach out to the unchurched/welcome converts and interfaith couples.
- Youth programs and Young Adult programs.
- Golden Age programs.
- Afternoon Greek Classes, Parochial School (where needed and if possible).
- Evening Greek or English Classes for adults.
- Soup Kitchen for the Homeless.
- Liaison to non-Orthodox religious civic or humanitarian groups.
- Counseling Services, Family and Personal (by qualified persons).
- Ways and Means - Fund-raising projects.
- A Talent Pool of Retirees or Available Parishioners. (There is a great deal of expertise available from this group that is seldom tapped and used in our parishes.)
- Study of liturgical music for Greek and English services.

And so many more possibilities that can be established according to the needs of and the availability of volunteers in a particular parish.

These are but a few ideas regarding the life of the parish community. Each parish has its own unique requirements and should, therefore, study its environment and profile carefully in order to decide how to approach the administration of the parish most efficiently and effectively.

We impress upon the reader that SERVICE TO THE CHURCH must be recognized by both clergy and

laity as a shared ministry. We are a family of God, and we must respect each other's responsibilities and efforts. Thus, as we undertake our various roles in the parish, we must remember that we are serving HIM, together with our fellow parishioners; and we must not engage in egocentric maneuvers that will destroy the very institution we are all working to strengthen. Our Church must remember that its responsibility is to be INclusive and NOT Exclusive.

The Diocese Level

Clearly prescribed in the Special Regulations of the Archdiocese (ARTICLE III) are the formation and requirements of a Diocesan Clergy-Laity Assembly. Section 4 of the Article states: The Diocesan Assembly shall be convened by the Bishop annually. Yet, some Bishops never convene such an assembly, while others convene assemblies only biennially.

There is no doubt that the Diocesan Assembly can be a very helpful part of the governance structure. It is interesting to note that the same article cited above states that the Assembly should "discuss matters of common concern and . . . submit proposals and recommendations to the Archdiocese for submission to the next Clergy-Laity Congress." Too often the meeting is not held and/or proposals not submitted.

We believe the Diocesan Assembly must not be ignored or omitted from the life of the institutional church. For purposes of efficiency and effectiveness, each Diocese should have a standard date for its meeting to take place and, of course, announced by the bishop "no later than ninety days in advance" as the regulations stipulate. This way the parishes can plan, prepare, and propose topics they want to place on the agenda. This time-frame also affords the parishes the opportunity to elect and instruct their delegates on the topics. And, knowing in advance when the Diocese Assembly will take place will also afford sufficient time for the host parish to make preparations.

The Diocese Assembly should be a working conference with a minimum emphasis on social and ceremonial activities and a maximum emphasis on working committees, workshops and discussion groups. Every opportunity should be given to the delegates and guests to exchange ideas, evaluate programs, study common problems and concerns, and take the necessary steps to enhance their Diocese and meet the needs of their constituent parishes.

It is our belief that in order to conduct a free and open conference, in order to share ideas and problems and understand them, and in order to make wise decisions, the conference officers must be elected by the delegates. This is not to say that the Bishop of the Diocese is not the Head of the Diocese, for he is. But, if he is also the presiding officer of the annual assembly, it is obviously very difficult to have a free and open conference, and in the long run it puts him in a very difficult position. He is the spiritual leader and can rule speakers out of order. It is imperative that the Bishop should maintain his position as the religious leader and be the guiding light and adviser to the assembly. He should counsel and help direct; he should NOT control and make the decisions for the entire body. In a democratic society and organization, the member delegates have the right and privilege of electing the officers of a meeting. This is correct parliamentary procedure and will allow the delegates to challenge, if necessary, the rulings of the Chair without feeling intimidated by the authority of a Bishop, thus, avoiding a confrontation with a religious leader. In this manner, we could truly have a free and open conference, and the delegates would know that they DO have the right, responsibility and opportunity to express their views. In the long run, the results will be far more acceptable and understandable, and the delegates will not return to their parishes with complaints and negative impressions.

If the real purpose of these Diocese Assemblies is to establish and cultivate a shared ministry between the clergy and the laity, then the right must be given to each Diocese to elect those persons - men and women - whom the delegates believe will best represent their work, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and goals for their Diocese. We, therefore, advocate the free election of conference officers.

Elect a Diocesan Council

If the Diocesan meeting operates with democratic principles, then it will be easy to continue that spirit and form a DIOCESAN COUNCIL which will be workable and productive. We suggest that the Diocesan Council be formed in the following manner. At the Diocese Assembly, five clergy and five lay persons should be elected by the delegates; the Bishop will appoint five additional persons, either clergy or lay or a combination, making a total of fifteen persons on the Diocesan Council. At their first meeting, they should elect their chairperson and secretary; and, of course, should meet at least quarterly with the Bishop. Further, both men and women should be considered for these positions, and the best qualified should be chosen.

The elected body of Diocesan Council members would also assist the Bishop in carrying out the mandates and programs of the Diocese.

We, of the Orthodox Christian Laity ministry, firmly believe that this type of fair and equal representation is absolutely essential if we are to establish and develop a ministry of lay participation. No matter how honorable and well-meaning the present members of the Diocesan Council may be, they are not elected representatives of the parishes and dioceses; they are appointees of the Bishop and they serve the one who appointed them, and not necessarily the church-at-large. More often than not, this closed and exclusionary procedure is a roadblock to free and open discussion of the real problems and needs of our parishes.

This is NOT how we should operate. We should not penalize people who may have differing points of view or who present a responsible opinion, or express an opposing idea; we should listen and try to understand and then let the majority decide whether or not the idea has merit. Too often we hear that the Diocesan Councils are run in an authoritarian manner.

There is no doubt in our minds that a Diocesan and ultimately the Archdiocesan Council will best serve our interests when they are truly elected bodies. We allow for one-third of the Diocese Council to be appointed by the Bishop; but the Council must be elected. They MUST be the representatives of the church members, their parishes. When the decisions and programs of the Diocese Assembly are made and announced, they reflect the work of all the parishes together, by the representatives of those parishes. Thus, the results, decisions and mandates will be accepted with greater interest and understanding. The parish delegates will return to their parishes with greater enthusiasm and vigor to put the programs to work, and not simply ignore the outcomes of the Assembly. There WILL BE greater satisfaction in cooperative work when the input has come from all the delegates.

If our church leaders, our hierarchs, expect the full and total support of the laity, and they should, then they must realize that the elected laity along with the elected clergy have the clear right and responsibility to participate in the decision-making process. ONLY THEN WILL WE BE ABLE TO EXPECT THE FULL AND TOTAL SUPPORT OF OUR PEOPLE.

As to the composition of the Assembly program, we must reflect what the parishes need and what their activities are. We must have workshops in which we teach and prepare delegates and guests about the specifics of parish administration and programming. We do have the responsibility of preparing our people for service. If the Diocese ignores this aspect of its work, it stands to lose many willing and capable people, who simply need a little inspiration, confidence, and training.

We may be too idealistic. We think not. The educational level and experience of our laity and clergy has advanced tremendously these past few decades. It is time for us to understand the needs of our people, especially our young people, as we prepare to enter the 21st century. If we can institute some of the procedures described here, we could truly reflect a SHARED MINISTRY OF LAITY, CLERGY, AND HIERARCHS. The Diocese level is the middle of our church structure. It must be structured with the same democratic pattern as the parish.

The Archdiocesan Level

The Clergy-Laity Congress
Archdiocesan Council
Financial Management
The Orthodox Observer
Discipline

The Clergy-Laity Congress

Those of us who have attended the Clergy-Laity Congresses during the past twenty years or more, are certainly aware that these biennial meetings have become largely social, ceremonial, and political in nature. If we are to do the work of the church properly on the national level, then all the social functions must be either removed or minimized drastically. There is no need for a continual series of formal breakfasts, luncheons and dinners, with a variety of receptions in between. At most, there should be ONE formal luncheon, and one banquet with a limited number of speakers, and with speakers who will reflect the religious theme and tone of the event they are attending. Otherwise, the attendees are victims of irrelevant subjects and embarrassing moments.

Those of us who have attended the Congresses have ALSO seen inordinate delays in starting meetings; in postponements and cancellations of committee meetings because a social event ran too long; or a social event has to begin; or delegates need time to dress for a formal event; and so forth.

As a result, important meetings have been compressed into an hour or two, leaving little or no time for thorough and honest examination of the issues before the delegates. At best, topics are considered in a superficial manner.

It is disturbing to see hundreds of delegates, both clergy and laity, milling around in a hotel lobby with nothing to do because of the delays or cancellations. This is hardly productive time-use, and is really very costly for our parishes and delegates.

The Archdiocese should also consider the wisdom of moving the Clergy-Laity Congress out of the big

cities where there are too many distractions, the costs are too high, and the atmosphere is not conducive to the spiritual-religious-administrative nature of the Congress. There are many very appropriate conference centers throughout the country that would be ideal for our kind of meeting. These conference centers also have their own hotel facilities, and they are located in more tranquil and appropriate environments than big-city hotels. If the atmosphere is appropriate, delegates are more likely to be more productive in their mission; and the tone of the Clergy-Laity Congress will be dignified and appealing. It is essential that the parish delegates have opportunities to meet and discuss topics of mutual concern with each other, with clergy and with hierarchs. Most professional, civic and religious organizations have already learned to use the facilities of conference centers where they are able to concentrate on their work and where they stand a better chance of achieving their goals. It's time for us to do the same.

Another area of our Congress structure and planning that requires attention is the educational and training areas. It is vitally important that we establish and conduct workshops on topics of religion, interfaith marriages, liturgical music, social issues, senior citizens, missions, outreach, youth program, fund raising, funding of our institutions, and administration and management of a parish and its components, and so many more subjects that are crying for attention and direction from the top. We need to utilize our competent professionals IN and OUTSIDE the church who can help prepare, guide, and conduct the workshops and training sessions we need. We need workshops that will help our men and woman who serve on parish councils understand their functions and roles better. We need workshops that will inspire young people to understand and be willing to participate in church administration properly.

Unless we use the Clergy-Laity meeting that is held every two years for improving our church institution, and training our people to better administer, and providing our people with spiritual renewal, WHY go to the trouble of holding these congresses? The legislative assemblies can do their work better when they have experienced the real meaning of CHURCH LEADERSHIP and ADMINISTRATION. It is incumbent upon the Archdiocese to provide such opportunities for making our church and parish administration more effective and productive.

As we explained earlier, it is essential for the Clergy-Laity Congress officers to be elected in the same manner that they are elected for the Diocese Conference. No one doubts that His Eminence the Archbishop is the over-all CHAIRMAN of the Congress; but the officer who actually conducts and presides over the assembly should NOT be the Archbishop or a Bishop or lay person appointed by him. It behooves the Archbishop to remain outside the legislative debates and to be present only to offer information, opinion and advice. The Archbishop should maintain his position as the religious leader and not be involved in "personality debates" nor must he be put in the position of ruling speakers out of order; this only tends to damage his role as religious leader. We must maintain respect and love for the Archbishop. He should be the guiding light and adviser to the congress; he should counsel and inspire.

He should NOT control and make decisions for the entire body, overlooking and ignoring the responsibilities of the delegates. Therefore, the elected presiding officer should be an unbiased person, man or woman, who is competent and capable, and who will be able to hold the respect of the delegates and conduct the proceedings in a truly business-like and professional manner according to established rules of parliamentary procedure. Furthermore, the Congress Committees must also have elected chairpersons, for they, too, need to be independent and responsive to the delegates.

We strongly recommend that strict adherence to schedules and meeting times be an important element of Congress. The plenary session **MUST BE** run in an orderly manner and take place as scheduled. Too often the program and schedule of the Conferences have been badly ignored and abused.

As we all know, the agenda for the Clergy-Laity Congress is prepared in advance by the various departments of the Archdiocese. Before the agenda is finalized, the parishes have the right to submit to the Archdiocese any item or topics they deem important to be **INCLUDED** on the agenda. In accordance with the Regulations, the Archdiocese notifies and invites the parishes to forward their input. The staff of the Archdiocese has the responsibility and obligation to prepare the final agenda, and to include **ALL THE INPUT** from the parishes, and then distribute the final agenda to the parishes three months in advance of the Congress. Only if that procedure is followed can we accept Archdiocesan claims that the congress is being conducted in a fair and open manner. Only if that procedure is followed will it be possible for the parishes to study the topics and instruct their delegates accordingly. But, this procedure, though stipulated in the Archdiocese bylaws, has **NOT BEEN FOLLOWED** in the recent past.

Finally, in keeping with what should be the primary focus on religious matters, we recommend that secular political figures and governmental figures, whether Greek or American not be invited to the Congress. We believe that there should be only two exceptions to this rule. The mayor or governor of the host city or state may be invited to give a brief "welcome" and public officials of the Orthodox faith can participate having the same status as any other Orthodox lay person.

Archdiocesan Council

Regarding the Archdiocesan Council, let us, once again, review the recommendation we made in this paper for the Diocese level. The Archdiocesan Council should be comprised of at least two elected laypersons and at least one elected clergyman from each Diocese. Then, we must **ADD** to that combined group all the Bishops of the church, the elected president of the Presbyters' Council, the elected president of the Retired Clergy, and ten more qualified individuals (either clergy or laity) appointed by the Archbishop. The numbers could easily be adjusted, if it is appropriate to do so; but, the end result must be a fair and equal representation so that they will share the responsibility of "interpreting and implementing the decisions of the Clergy-Laity Congresses." We believe that such a structure is truly more representative, more democratic, and is in a better position to represent the interests of the entire church because it is accountable to a cross-section of our entire church institution.

ARTICLE II, Sec. 5 of the Special Regulations spell out in detail the purpose and functions of the Archdiocesan Council. The Archbishop is given the authority to select and appoint from the Archdiocesan Council an "Executive Committee of nine which shall have in the interim between meetings of the Archdiocesan Council all of its authority, excluding legislative powers." However, in Sec. 6 of the same Article, it states: "In the event legislation is required between Clergy-Laity Congresses, the Archbishop shall convene the Archdiocesan Council for the purpose of adopting legislation." In other words, the Archdiocesan Council can have the same powers as the Clergy-Laity Congresses.

On the other hand, several members of Archdiocesan Councils have admitted that very little, if any serious work is covered in Council meetings; that most of the real work is done by the Executive Committee - the "super nine." Thus, most of the significant decisions of our Archdiocesan

administration are made by nine persons who serve at the Archbishop's beck and call and owe allegiance totally and completely to him. This centralization of real legislative authority in the Church is a significant factor for sapping the vitality of both the Clergy-Laity Congress and the Archdiocesan Council. The restoration of power, authority and information to the Clergy-Laity Congress and the Archdiocesan Council are essential steps to revitalizing these fundamental structures of the Church. Reducing the size of the Council and providing for the election of its clergy and lay members will do much to make the Council more effective.

Financial Management

Recently serious questions have been raised by OCL and by other concerned laypeople concerning the financial management of the Church. The Archdiocese has announced that it is suffering a significant deficit and that it has had to reduce its support of important ministries of the Church. Additionally, the Archdiocese has sold off substantial real properties it owns in New York, and very nearly gave a long term lease for much of the land of the Holy Cross Seminary to private developers.

These indications of financial stress raise grave concerns of several types for OCL.

First, are the funds and operations of the Archdiocese being managed in as efficient and cost effective a manner as possible? Proper financial management is essential not only to reduce costs, but also as part of an effective fundraising program.

Second, if Archdiocese properties are to be sold, are they being sold as a result of a rational business plan or are they being sold for ready cash?

Third, are church properties being sold in a commercially reasonable fashion or is the church being burdened with excessive commissions, fees and charges?

Fourth, a full accounting of the church's financial position performed by outside independent auditors should be published regularly in the Orthodox Observer.

OCL is not in a position to state conclusions as to the financial status of the Archdiocese, but we do recognize the legitimacy of the concerns for our church.

We strongly recommend that a thorough review of the Archdiocese's financial affairs be performed by a firm of independent financial consultants to study the financial management of the Archdiocese, to recommend improved practices, and to create a financial plan to eliminate the deficit and, if necessary, to guide the disposition of real property.

The Orthodox Observer

The Observer is not only the voice of the Archdiocese to the community, it is also the voice of the community to itself. The newspaper on the whole has not performed either task in a satisfactory manner. Although the Observer covers the Archbishop's schedule in meticulous detail, there is rarely an article on the condition of the Archdiocese or its major ministries. Significant stories involving Orthodoxy are written in such an unbalanced fashion that the reader often has to read between the lines to catch the meaning of an article. A person could regularly read the Observer and be totally unaware of

the status of the Archdiocese.

Furthermore, the Observer, perhaps uniquely among bilingual publications, functions as two different documents. The Greek language portion of the paper is not a translation of the English, but is often a wholly different newspaper with different articles and a different focus. The Observer thus treats the Church community as two separate audiences with very little in common.

The Observer also fails as a voice of the community. It is a scandal that the editorial policy of the Observer forbids any mention of OCL or other groups in its pages even though OCL frequently has been covered by the Greek, religious and secular papers. The Observer's editorial policy should include objective articles and commentary about all issues of concern to the Church. It requires a "Voice of the People" section on vital concerns of the community.

Discipline

One of the most embarrassing moments in the history of the Church in this nation occurred when a bishop of the Church was accused of sexual misconduct with the daughter of a parish priest by a national newsmagazine. OCL cannot comment on the guilt or innocence of the Bishop. However, the procedural course of this case raises many questions about the operations of the Church.

So far as is known, the accusations against the Bishop have never been fairly resolved in either a civil or ecclesiastical tribunal of any kind. A civil suit against the Archdiocese was dismissed because it was filed after the expiration of the statute of limitations. The "ecclesiastical" court that was purportedly convened did not hear the testimony of the alleged victim. Thus, he has never had an opportunity to clear his name; the accuser has never had an opportunity to present her case, and the faithful even now cannot say whether a Greek Orthodox Bishop has disgraced himself and the Church or whether he is the innocent victim of false accusations.

The Church must adopt clearly understood procedures by which to resolve cases like this in a fair, just and open fashion. The status of this case does no one justice.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

Another Approach to the Problems

We believe this paper has certainly focused on some of the most glaring problems in the administration (or governance) of our institutional church. We also believe that some important recommendations and solutions have been considered and included. Yet, we recognize that there are more ways to view the problems and perhaps find inspiration and guidance from them. Thus, we add to our report the following ideas that are strongly based in theological reasons.

Is THE CHURCH an institution? Even if the Church uses institutional forms, yet She is clearly NOT an institution. (It would be wise to speak of the Church as a person, rather than a thing.) The Church is the Body of Christ, a mystical, somatic entity. A better foundation for any call for "inclusiveness" would be the words of St. Paul.

Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the

Church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments [administration might be included here], diversities of tongues (I Corinthians 12:27,28).

Now there certainly is a need to discuss these roles which define leadership in the Church. A discussion of the Apostolic, Prophetic, and Didactic duties and responsibilities of both the clergy and the laity is long overdue in the Orthodox Church. And it is in the somatic model of the Church that we have our paradigm for inclusiveness.

For the Body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the Body; is it therefore not of the Body (I Corinthians 12:14,15)?

This approach would serve not only to encourage the laity in the tremendous diversity which our Church really does afford them, but it would also challenge the clergy as to their real role in service to Christ in His Church. What has happened instead is that the clergy, bishops and presbyters alike, have adopted the institutional forms of the secular world. These forms are nothing more than luxurious apparel on the Body of Christ, weighing down and burdening the Faith.

But what of the pretentious and imperious damasks we clothe our behavior in? Thankfully, in Christ we have a solution to this divergence from the meaning of Orthodoxy:

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from Supper and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin and began to wash the Disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded So after He had washed their feet and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; Ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Amen, amen, I say unto you. The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them (John 13:3-5,12-17).

This is an Orthodox model for administration! It's timely for our day.

It is important to show how the basic foundation of any theological argument influences the approaches to solutions. Philip Sherrard said it this way in *The Eclipse of Man and Nature* (45):

It is useless for Christians to try to grapple with and find solutions for contemporary problems if the only intellectual weapons they have to hand are those which contributed to the production of these problems in the first place.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In this report we have tried to focus on the major problems that seem to impede the work of the institutional church. We are fast approaching the 21st century; we are living in a world of great social and political intensity. We will see changes around us that we cannot begin to imagine at this time. Are we ready to face this world with personal peace and understanding? Will our children move into that environment knowing they have a religious home - a Church - that can give them inspiration, peace,

and guidance?

We fear that our institutional church will be facing more problems as the world makes more demands on our lives. Our Orthodox people will not be able to find an understanding church, a church governance and administration that has looked ahead to envision and prepare for their needs, not to mention the needs of the Orthodox in the 1990s.

We want to be proud of our institutional church and the manner in which it is administered and managed; we want it demonstrated that it is achieving its goals, that it is truly serving the faithful. We want to see it fit into the world effectively, not only as a beautiful religious faith, but also as an institution that can and will serve her people in an exemplary manner.